METRO / A19
7 suspected KFR gang members killed in shootout with cops

BUSINESS / B1
Merrill Lynch cuts RP growth forecast but it's avoiding recession in '09

NEWS / A7
Villar tops SWS survey of 'presidentiables'

HOLDING ON TO HOPE A woman wraps her arms around an iron gate to stop police from evicting her from a gov't-owned tenement building in Brgy. Tejeros, Makati City. (Story on Page A19) —

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, June 3, 2009 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 175 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Honest HK OFW gets cash, solons' commendation

By Leila B. Salaverria

A SENATOR AND A congressman have headed a jobless Filipino in Hong Kong for returning HK$330,549 or P2.1 million in cash and checks she found in a garbage bin to its owner.

In return, the grateful owner gave her a

HONEST: A11

MILDRED PEREZ: Proudly a talent home

House rams through Con-ass resolution

Nograles: GMA told allies to push HR 1109

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Leila B. Salaverria

USING THEIR MASSIVE numbers, President Macapagal-Arroyo's allies in the House of Representatives last night crushed all objections and passed a resolution setting up a constituent assembly (Con-ass) amid opposition warnings it would allow Ms Arroyo to stay in power beyond 2010.

In a marathon session that dragged toward midnight, a former administration stalwart, ousted Speaker Jose de Venecia, lambasted the majority vote as "a charade." Other opposition lawmakers accused the majority of railroading the resolution, which was approved by acclamation at about 11:20 p.m.

Approval of House Resolution No. 1109 empowered Congress to convene itself into a Con-ass in which members of the House and the Senate would vote jointly—not separately—to amend the Constitution.

Senators have said this would render the upper chamber inutile because the larger House numbers

HOUSE: A17

CLASS SUIT The ladies wear well-tailored suits at the Senate to listen to Sen. Loren Legarda expose the troubles they had seen with a reportedly well-connected woman, who swindled them out of their heirlooms, estate and family jewels via pawning the same for easy cash and selling their pawn tickets for more revenue streams. The socialites in the gallery are, from left, Chieng Cruz, Deedee Paliquis, honorary consul of the Republic of Gambia, Agnes Hollombee, Barbara Tolentino and husband Mike. (PHOTO BY

Socialites' swindle spurs Senate probe

By Christine O. Avendaño and Cathy C. Yamsuan

SEN. LOREN LEGARDA HAS TAKEN UP the cudgels for the rich socialites who were swindled of their jewelry worth hundreds of millions of pesos.

Legarda yesterday asked and got the nod of the Senate to look into the operations of the pawnshop business following a scam involving a jewelry agent under investigation for duping "dozens" of rich women in the country.

Calling attention "to the abuses and injury that are being committed against the public through these pawnshops," Legarda delivered a privilege speech detailing the "modus operandi" of Ms. Elena So-Guiandu, aka Marilou Guiandu, who she said implemented the scam with "the help of her family, friends and relatives."

SOCIALITES: A11

FVR, Estrada meet this week; desertions hit Lakas-Kampi

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and TJ Burgonio

LESS THAN A WEEK AFTER THEIR WIDELY trumpeted merger, some members of the Lakas-Kampi-CMD party are already looking to jump ship, with eyes there' chair emeritus, former President Fidel V. Ramos, willing to sit down with opposition chieftain Joseph Estrada.

Eli Mislay, Ramos' spokesperson, said a Ramos-Estrada meeting could happen anytime soon and its results could have a major impact on the administration's merged party.

The Supreme has confirmed that Estrada agreed to meet with Ramos before Estrada flies to the Middle East on June 8 for a wedding tour.

Accompanied by his son, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, the deposed leader will have speaking engagements before Filipino workers in the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, a-

FVR-ESTRADA: A17

Gibo rating disappoints Malacañang

By Christian V. Esguerra and Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG IS NOT AT ALL AMUSED by Defense Secretary Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro's measly one-percent rating in the latest Pulse Asia survey of voters' preferred presidential aspirants.

"I'm surprised and disappointed that the ratings of Secretary Teodoro are the way they were presented in the survey," Gabriel Claudio, presidential political adviser, said yesterday at a press briefing. "I personally would have expected, would have wanted to see him past higher ratings."

Teodoro, a former member of the House of Representatives, is seeking to be the

GIBO RATING: A17

Ready to die? torturers told Fil-Am activist

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SHE WAS HANDCUFFED, LOCKED IN A room, beaten and suffocated with a plastic bag for six days.

And in between, Filipino-American activist Melissa Roxas said in an affidavit, one of her interrogators told her "they were the instruments of God for rebels to return to the fold."

Roxas, who had begun to think that death was near, replied: "The God I know does not condone torture and violation."

READY: A19

SHOCKED Germans react to the continuing rights abuses here. In fact sheets, the numbers seem to abstract but to see the photos of each victim and read his/her story is a shocker, says Hannah Wolf of the German-Philippine initiative "Tornabay Tayo! Walking Together for Justice."

No survivors feared in Air France jet crash; Filipino also on board

RIO DE JANEIRO—FACED BY stormy seas and with scant hope of finding survivors, planes and ships on Tuesday searched for the wreckage of Air France Flight 447, which vanished over the Atlantic Ocean with 228 people aboard, one of them a Filipino seaman on his way home to the Philippines.

Brazil's Air Force said it had found airplane seats and other debris floating in the ocean along the path that the missing jet was flying from Rio de Janeiro to Paris. But authorities could not immediately confirm they were from the plane.

The chance of finding survivors now "is very very small, even nonexistent," the French minister overseeing transportation, Jean-Louis Borloo, said.

In Manila, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) identified the lone Filipino on board as Andro Jaguera, a seaman.

The DFA, quoting a report from its embassy in Brasilia, said that Jaguera, whose vessel

NO SURVIVORS: A6

EDUCATION: WHAT MATTERS MOST

DepEd food aid feeding political ambitions?

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

(Last of a series)

THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO NOURISH impoverished schoolchildren, but the P5-billion feeding programs of the Department of Education (DepEd) are found to be feeding political ambitions instead.

i-TEAM Report

Fernando del Mundo Chief

Last year, some 1.0 million public grade school pupils received a kilo of rice each for at least 20 days under President Macapagal-Arroyo's Food for School Program (FSP).

This year, the DepEd said it had sufficient budget to sustain rice distribution for 140 days, from the opening of classes until the summer break in 2010.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus credits the FSP and the DepEd's other nutrition projects—breakfast feeding and healthy start—with lowering malnutrition among pupils, keeping them in school and improving their academic performance.

DEPED FOOD: A11

US: Where you find Jollibees, there's military, economic security in Mindanao

IN THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF battling insurgents and poverty that plague Mindanao, the United States is in part measuring success by a far more whimsical standard: Jollibee outlets.

A US state department official privately said that the Philippine fast-food chain had become a symbol of economic and military security in Mindanao, where 70 percent of Muslims in some areas live below the poverty line.

Multiple extremist organizations, including one linked to al-Qaida, have in-

US: WHERE: A4

WEATHER FORECAST
TODAY: Some and showers; afternoon cloudy skies with rain which may trigger landslides and landslides. The rest of the country will have cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms during the afternoon or evening.

Metro Manila Scattered showers Manila Scattered showers
Baguio Scattered showers Davao Cloudy with rain
Tuguegarao Scattered showers Cebu Cloudy with rain
Legaspi Scattered showers Iloilo Cloudy with rain
Puerto Princesa Scattered showers Zamboanga Partly cloudy
Tacloban Scattered showers Cagayan de Oro Partly cloudy
Catarman Scattered showers Koronadal Partly cloudy

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SUERTRES* 2PM Draw: 0 3 6 5PM Draw: 4 6 2 9PM Draw: 8 1 1
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4 bank execs to be arraigned

FOUR EXECUTIVES OF AN ALLEGED dummy firm of the bankrupt US-based Lehman Brothers investment bank will be arraigned on June 16 at the Muntinlupa Regional Trial Court on charges of violating the Anti-Dummy Law.

Judge Edwin Sorongon set the date for the arraignment of the Metrobank officials, Carlos Matutino, Ma. Lourdes Castañeda and Jose Marie Ravignal Lim after it granted a prosecution motion to set aside a previous plea to withdraw the case.

The four were among five incorporators of Philippine Investment One Inc. (PIOI) who were sued by businessman Victor Villavicencio, president of the Triple 9 Group of companies.

Villavicencio alleged that PIOI was actually owned by Lehman Brothers and that Castañeda, Ravignal Lim, Matutino, Matutino and a fifth incorporator, Michael Balcoba, were only dummies.

PIOI had acquired in 2001 a property on Shaw Blvd. in Mandaluyong that was owned by Villaconejo from the then Equitable-PCI Bank under the Special Purpose Vehicle Law.

The law was passed in 2002 to help banks dispose of bad loans and idle assets which were sold in bulk to asset management companies that were, in turn, bought by foreign investors who specialize in bad asset recovery.

Equitable-PCI Bank foreclosed on the property in 1999 to pay for a P900-million debt with the bank, but with the stipulation that Villaconejo could buy it back within a period of 10 years.

On Sept. 4, 2008, the court issued preliminary attachment against the five respondents.

But a Department of Justice resolution signed by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez on Sept. 11, 2008, granted the petition of the accused for a reversal of the case and set aside the findings of probable cause by the Mandaluyong prosecutor.

On Sept. 22, 2008, the Mandaluyong prosecutor moved to withdraw the motion, and the court granted it in its order dated May 26.

The case against Reforma is under reconsideration, court records showed.

JIJ Yap

Smartmatic a cinch for automated poll contract

By Kristine L. Alave

THE SMARTMATIC INTERNATIONAL AND TOTAL INFORMATION Management Corp. (TIM) consortium is the "virtual" winner of the contract to automate the 2010 elections, according to the Commission on Elections procurement committee.

Nathaniel Balmaceda, chair of the special bids and awards committee, said the committee would recommend by late last night that the Comelec award the contract for the P11-billion automation project to the consortium consisting of the Netherlands-based Smartmatic International and the local TIM.

"It should be obvious. It's the Smartmatic-TIM consortium," said Balmaceda when asked if the committee was ready to recommend a bidder.

"Congratulations! Let us work together. Let's watch the system. We must always follow the law while aiming also to follow our own good honor, custody and peaceful electronic election," he said.

Only qualifier

Of the seven companies that submitted bids last May 4, Smartmatic-TIM was the only one that passed all the eligibility, financial and technical requirements during the month-long bidding process that saw rival bidders wading banks against each other and tensions simmering late into the evening.

The consortium's tender was P7.2 billion, about P4 billion lower than what the Comelec had originally budgeted.

"They passed all the criteria, the legal eligibility, the technical and the financial. They submitted a complying financial bid and then we tested the machines against all the 24 criteria," Balmaceda said.

After receiving the recommendation, the Comelec en banc is expected to deliberate on it and make an announcement within a week.

With only one bidder qualified for the P11-billion electronic voting project, Balmaceda said it is highly unlikely that the en banc would reject the recommendation.

Fair to all bidders

He said the bidding process was fair to all bidders and hoped that the losing companies would not challenge the decision as it was made with openness.

"Every thing they did here was recorded," he said.

As the winning bidder, Smartmatic-TIM not only will have to supply the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) machines, it will have to implement and manage the information technology aspect of the elections, where about 50 million Filipinos are expected to participate.

The PCOS is a ballot-based voting and counting machine that will be installed in each precinct. After the precinct closes, the data from the machine will be transmitted to the next canvassing level.

The Comelec hopes that computerization would minimize large-scale electoral fraud and cheating, which have plagued previous elections.

TIM is a Philippine-based information technology solutions company established in 1985. It has implemented IT projects for government departments like the Social Security System, the Department of Trade and Industry and Government Service Insurance System, among others.

The list of corporate clients include banks, manufacturing firms and telecommunications companies.

Both the TIM and Smartmatic have had previous experience with the Comelec.

Land mines hamper rescue of last Red Cross hostage

LAND MINES PLANTED BY ISLAMIC militants are slowing efforts to free an Italian Red Cross worker being held captive in Mindanao, as Cabinet officials said Tuesday.

The involvement of foreign Islamic militants believed to be seeking the Abu Sayyaf bandit group was also complicating efforts to end the hostage crisis in Jolo, Sulu, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said.

Intelligence reports indicate the hostage, Eugenio Vagni, is alive but is being moved around, Puno said.

He said land mines planted by the Abu Sayyaf were slowing down government troops hunting the kidnappers.

"The matter is complicated by the fact that some international terrorists are moving with them," Puno told the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines.

"This is emboldening them and at the same time making them more resolute and harder to talk to," he said.

Al-Qaida links

One of those believed to be aiding the Abu Sayyaf is Umar Patek, an Indonesian member of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) regional terror group who is wanted for the 2002 Bali bombings that killed 202 people.

Both the Abu Sayyaf and JI have known links to the international terror group al-Qaida headed by Osama bin Laden.

Government forces plan to take military action soon to prevent the Abu Sayyaf from releasing Vagni after five months of jungle captivity, Puno said.

"We are about to embark on another serious effort at enforcement if it will not endanger the life of this 'degol,'" he said, without elaborating.

Abu Sayyaf commander Nasser Ignasan—who is believed to be harboring Patek and other bombmakers in Jolo's jungles—has been one of the hardest persons to deal with, Puno said.

Ignasan is a Middle East-trained militant with suspected links to the Taliban and other foreign extremist groups.

Vagni, 62, who suffers from hypertension and a hernia, was abducted on Jan. 15 with two other International Committee of the Red Cross workers—Swiss Andreas Notter and Filipina Mary Jean Lacaba.

Lacaba and Notter were released separately in April, allegedly after ransom was paid.

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates mentioned the kidnappings on Monday during a discussion of the terror threat in Southeast Asia with Philippine Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, officials said.

AFP, AP, Kristine L. Alave

Top AFP execs pocketing bulk of rewards, says prof

DIMAMPAO

ZAMBOANGA CITY—High-ranking military officials are the ones benefiting from the United States' Rewards for Justice Program and not the community or informants who helped in the arrest of terror suspects, according to peace advocates.

Octavio Dimampao, a professor at the Mindanao State University in Iligan, cited a village official in Patikul who was reportedly instrumental in locating the grave of slain Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani.

"The official has been complaining that he was one of those used as a dummy to collect the reward from the US government, but that he and his relatives only got a small amount because the bulk of the money went to some high military officials," Dimampao said.

"It turned out that he and his relatives got pennies compared to the lion's share taken by the facilitators-handlers of the reward money," Dimampao said.

Serious allegations

Lt. Jonnifrel Cacho, spokesperson of the military's Western Mindanao Command said the allegations were serious. "But for now I have to say that it's not true." Cacho said there should be proof to support the allegations.

Father Cirilo Nacorda, a key witness in the investigation into the alleged collusion between some military officials and the Abu Sayyaf, said he knew of someone who was rewarded but could not enjoy the reward money because he was an asset of the Armed Forces.

A source told the Inquirer that high-ranking military officials had indeed facilitated the withdrawal of the reward money from a government bank here by some informants.

He said a military general has yet to account for the bulk of the money that was withdrawn.

"This general has yet to account for P100 million out of P180 million withdrawn from the bank," the source said.

More effective system

Nacorda said that instead of giving rewards, the government should come up with a more effective system that ordinary people can feel.

"The huge fund could be used to strengthen defense forces in the communities, educate people on how to protect and assert their rights, and how to fight and put a stop to the culture of fear," he said.

Based on his experience, Nacorda said the peace and security situation in Basilan has not improved even with the rewards system.

"It actually worsened, because in the past, criminals and kidnappers hided in the dark, and operated in the hinterlands. But now, kidnapping is done in daylight, killings and extortion letters could easily be delivered to some establishments, hostile awarding ceremonies which are only being promoted by civilian volunteers and Caltex with limited resources," he said.

Dimampao said "kidnappers have even become bolder to hide."

The US Rewards for Justice Program offers money for information that leads to the arrest or conviction of anyone who plans, commits or attempts international terrorist acts against US persons or property, previous such acts from occurring, that leads to the location of a key terrorist leader, or that disrupts terrorism financing. Julie's Aljuela, Inquirer Mindanao

Migrant workers day on Sunday

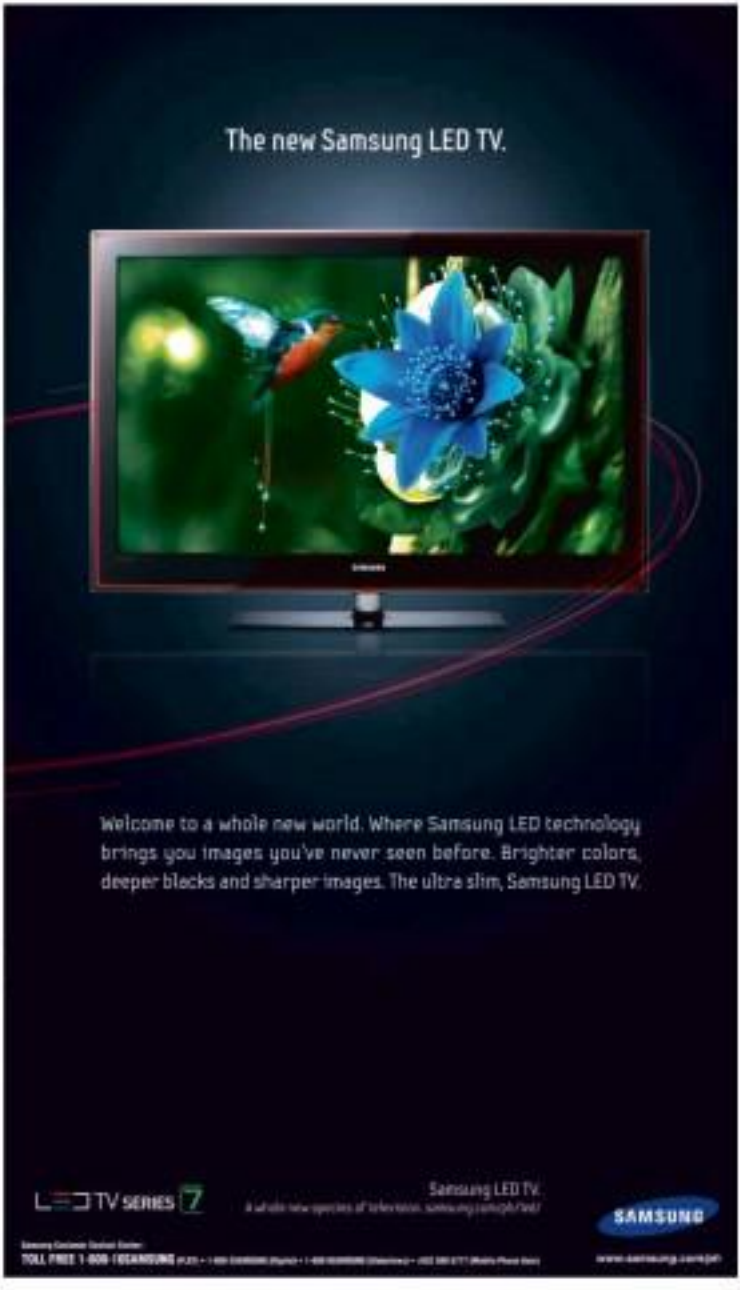
TRADE AND LIVELIHOOD BAZAARS showcasing entrepreneurial ventures of overseas Filipino workers, awards to outstanding OFWs and families, motorcades of OFW family circles are among the activities lined up nationwide to celebrate the 14th Migrant Workers Day on June 7.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) designated the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) to spearhead this year's celebration with the theme "Aruga ng Pamahalaan: Dagdagpag- asa sa Kinabukasan at Tatlong ng Pinoy Kapit." Observances this year highlights the economic and social welfare assistance to OFWs and their families.

Owwa Administrator Carmelita S. Dimzon said that family day type of activities will mark the celebration to include cultural presentations, sentimd and dental missions, live entertainment, fun and games, raffle draws, free overseas calls and contests.

"The Migrant Workers Day is an occasion to honor overseas Filipino workers.

Major sponsors such as Globe Telecom and Banco de Oro will also present corporate giveaways.



11 of 21 swine flu cases now cured

ELEVEN OF THE 21 CONFIRMED CASES OF influenza A (H1N1) in the country have already been discharged as of yesterday, according to the Department of Health.

Six new confirmed cases have been reported to the last 24 hours, said Health Secretary Francisco Duque III.

Duque said all the confirmed cases are mild to moderate and are responding well to the course of treatment, including the administration of the anti-viral drug Oseltamivir.

Among those discharged were five of the 11 confirmed cases who came into contact with two infected Taiwanese mother and daughter at a wedding in Zamboanga last May 17.

Duque said the further spread of H1N1 among the rest of the wedding guests and their close contacts have been markedly contained, since no new cases have emerged since the 10-day quarantine period ended on May 27.

"That case is closed," he said of the H1N1 infection among the Zamboanga wedding guests.

Meanwhile, five college students who came into contact with a 19-year-old female confirmed case are under home quarantine until June 4, according to health officials.

The 19-year-old student who showed flu-like symptoms on May 26, four days after she returned from a trip to the United States, has already been discharged.

But the five classmates who visited her on May 25, a day after she landed in manifest symptoms, have to observe home quarantine.

No symptoms

If they continue to be flu-free by June 4, that means they are not infected with H1N1, said national chief epidemiologist Dr. Eric Tayag.

Aside from the five classmates, 31 other schoolmates and friends of the 19-year-old have also been placed under home quarantine until June 6.

If they don't exhibit any symptoms after June 4, "we can say the case is already closed," Tayag said.

Duque said the health department is not recommending the suspension of classes in the 19-year-old's Ateneo High school as the patient has already fully recovered and there have been no other confirmed cases among other students of the school.

Under DOH guidelines, school administrators may only suspend classes if there is already a confirmed case among their students, faculty or school personnel.

In Tacloban City, an Australian national has been placed under observation at the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC) for possible H1N1 infection when he showed flu-like symptoms a few days after arriving in Eastern Samar.

Dr. Alberto de Leon, the EVRMC chief, yesterday said specimens taken from the 21-year-old patient have been sent to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine in Manila for confirmatory tests. The results will be known today.

The Australian arrived in the country last May 28 and immediately proceeded to the hometown of his fiancee in Dumarit, Eastern Samar. But on June 1, he experienced high fever and a cold, De Leon said.

High fever and cold are among the symptoms of the H1N1 virus.

Last Monday, the man's plane was brought to a private hospital in Tacloban City. He was then directly transferred to the EVRMC and placed in an isolation room after he was found to have high fever and cold.

The EVRMC is the designated hospital in the Eastern Visayas region where patients showing H1N1 symptoms are to be brought for confinement and treatment.

Australia is one of the countries where there are confirmed H1N1 cases.

Dr. Leon alleged from of the public about H1N1 as the region has no confirmed case.

He said the EVRMC was equipped with medicines and doctors to respond to H1N1.

The DOH regional office in Cebu said the first two confirmed cases of H1N1 in Cebu City were discharged yesterday after their second nasal samples tested negative.

The two, a 13-year-old boy who arrived from Hong Kong and a 1-year-old Filipino-American girl from the US, were allowed to leave after the DOH received the test results from the NITM, said DOH regional director Susana Machuletza.

The last of the three confirmed H1N1 cases in Cebu, a 42-year-old woman, remained confined in a private hospital. *—Inong Pizzaro-Bangoy with Joey A. Gabieta and Burmeo Papelleran, Inquirer Visayas*

59 foreigners deported in 1st 5 months

By Marlon Ramos

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION (BI) HAS sent back 59 "undesirable aliens" to their native countries during the first five months of 2009, Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said yesterday.

In a statement, Libanan said the foreigners were deported for various violations of the country's immigration laws.

The deportation of the erring aliens, he said, was part of the government's program to decongest its detention areas in Bicutan, Taguig City.

From 180 foreign detainees two years ago, Libanan said the number of inmates at the BI jail facility had dropped to 49.

"We consider this as a very big achievement because we have succeeded in decongesting the living conditions of our detainees while addressing squarely the problem of overcrowding in our detention cell," Libanan said.

In accordance with its rules, BI Associate Commissioner Enrique Gubang Jr. said the bureau has tried to facilitate the deportation of illegal aliens within three months after they arrested.

However, the alien's deportation may only be delayed if there is a civil or criminal case pending against him in court, "Gubang said.

Gubang said they would immediately order the deportation of other jailed foreigners once the BI obtains the needed court and police clearances.

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
Kagawaran ng Tanggulang Pambansa
Department of National Defense

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
(Procurement of Services)

1. The Department of National Defense, through the DND-Project Bids and Awards Committee, invites registered and accredited individuals to apply for eligibility and submit bid for the following projects:

Name of Project	Description	Approved Budget for Contract (ABC)
1. Subscription of Local Newspapers	Subscription of Local Newspapers for DND-Private Offices	1,000,000.00
2. The Philippine Blog of Defense	Website hosting of Weblog of DND Weblog (Phase III)	1,500,000.00
	GRAND TOTAL	Php 2,500,000.00

2. The schedule of activities are as follows:

ACTIVITIES	VENUE	DATE	TIME
Issuance of Bid Documents	DND Procurement Management Division, 3rd floor, DAP Building, Aurora Blvd., Cubao, Quezon City	March 03, 2009 to June 01, 2009	8:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Pre-Bid Conference	DND Conference Hall Lounge, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City	June 11, 2009	10:00 AM
Deadline for Submission/ Opening of Bids	DND Conference Hall Lounge, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City	June 26, 2009	10:00 AM
Post Qualification, Evaluation of Bids & Issuance of Notice of Award	To be notified	To be notified	To be notified

3. Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount as indicated below to the DND Project BAC Secretariat, 3rd Floor Room 302 DND Building, Office of the Secretary (Beside the Department of Agriculture, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Tel No. 911-5922 or Tel/Fax 911-5916.

Name of Project	Cost of Bid Documents
1. Subscription of Local Newspapers	1,000.00
2. The Philippine Blog of Defense	1,000.00

Bidders who shall acquire the bidding documents on the announced bidding kit any of the terms stated may no longer secure said bidding documents but they are encouraged to participate from the DND Project BAC Secretariat.

4. The eligibility documents consisting of valid and current Mayor's/Business Permit issued by the city or municipality where the principal place of business of the prospective bidder is located, Tax Clearance per Executive Order 398, series of 2005, Audited Financial Statements, Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) computation, Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License and registration for the type and cost of the contract to be bidded, Omnibus Sworn Statement (OSS) and other documents required by the Bidding Documents shall be submitted in accordance with the provisions of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part II, Section 23.4.1.

5. Any document to be submitted by the prospective bidders during the bidding must be compliant to the requirements set forth in the Bidding Documents. Any document submitted in the original or the DND Project BAC Secretariat. The DND Project BAC will not accept any document dated after the original or a machine copy certified by the DND Project BAC Secretariat during the bid opening.

6. All prospective bidders are encouraged to submit a certificate of eligibility not later than two (2) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids.

7. The DND-Project reserves the right to reject any/all bid(s), waive any formality and accept the bid(s) as may be deemed to the best interest of the government.

8. The DND-Project reserves the right to reject any bid that is found to be non-responsive and to waive any defect therein to accept bids as it may deem most advantageous to the government.

9. The Contractor is also subject to the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) pursuant to Section 8.5.2 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R.A. 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. It shall be the duties of contractors to assist in the conduct of the Contractor's Performance Evaluation System (CPES).

(Sgd.) ANGELITO T. BALIGOD
Undersecretary
Chairman, DND-Project BAC

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Cebu City Division
DepED
DIVISION OF CEBU CITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education, Division of Cebu City, thru Jovina Jocson, Cebu City, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites supplier/manufacturer/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Supply and Delivery of Computers
Location	District Division of Cebu City, Jovina Jocson, Cebu City
Brief Description	Lot A - Elementary Tables and Chairs, Amount: P1,179,480.00
	Lot B - Elementary and Secondary Armchair Amount: P1,170,400.00
	Lot C - Teacher's Desk and Chair Amount: P108,000.00
MOA of Funding Source	Funding Source is the Government of the Philippines (GOP) 2009 General Appropriations Act (GAA) (75% Allocation)
Contract Duration	One Hundred Eighteen (118) Calendar Days
Delivery Sites	"Door to Door" delivery to various recipient schools (See schedule of Requirements of the Bidding Documents)

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an annual value of 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment planned, leased or under purchase available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is available in the Eligibility Check Sheet. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall be non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

As particulars, relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conferences, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 25 to June 1, 2009
2. Pre-bid Conference	June 5, 2009 10:00 AM
3. Opening of Bids	June 15, 2009 10:00 AM
4. Post-qualification	June 16, 2009
5. Notice of Award	June 26, 2009

Bid Documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Three Thousand Five Hundred Pesos Only (P3,500.00) to the Division Office's Cashier.

The Department of Education, Division of Cebu City assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of his bid.

APPROVED BY:

(Sgd.) **BALTAZAR T. JIMENEZ**
Bids Chairman

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, June 3, 2009
9th Week in Ordinary Time
Charles Lwanga and Companions
1st Reading: Tb 2:1-11a, 12b-17a
Gospel: Mk 12:18-27

The Sadducees came to Jesus. Since they claim that there is no resurrection, they questioned him in this way, 'Master, in the Scripture Moses gave us this law: If anyone dies and leaves a wife but no children, his brother must take the wife and give her a child who will be considered the child of his deceased brother.' Now there were seven brothers. The first married a wife, but he too died without leaving any children. The second took the wife and he, too, died leaving no children. The same thing happened to the third. Finally the seven died leaving no children. Last of all the woman died. Now, in the resurrection, to which of them will she be wife? For the seven had her as wife."

Jesus replied, "Could you be wrong in this regard because you understand neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? When they rise from the dead, men and women do not marry but are like the angels in heaven.

"Now about the resurrection of the dead, have you never referred to the chapter of the burning bush in the book of Moses? God said to him: I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is the God, not of the dead but of the living. You are totally wrong."

Commentary:

What does this gospel have to do with the kind of life we live? We come to a point, where our lives can be lived with a certain measure of hope, a certain measure of ease, a certain amount of achievement, a certain measure of confidence. These are qualities in our lives because we know there is something beyond our lives. There is a paradise to our living on this earth. We can have these qualities because we know that the things that are of value in this life are not things of value in the life to come.

Mancao to get bulletproof vest on arrival

By Norman Bordadora and Tina G. Santos

NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION officers will hand former police superintendent Usec Mancao a bulletproof vest when he arrives home on Thursday to testify against high police and government officials believed to be involved in the killing of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito in 2000.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said Mancao, who waived his rights to contest his extradition from the United States and agreed to turn state witness, had requested the security vest.

"I received a call from [Mancao's lawyer] asking that he be given a bulletproof vest," Gonzalez said at a press briefing yesterday.

Gonzalez said the NBI has not monitored any specific threat against Mancao but were "not taking anything for granted."

NBI officers will land Mac-Arthur on the tarmac in the Philippine Airlines plane from Los Angeles and other tight security measures will be in place. Mancao will stay in the custody of the NBI, Gonzalez added.

Mancao was brought by US Marshals from Fort Lauderdale, Florida to Los Angeles detention cell yesterday. He will be turned over to Philippine authorities.

NBI officers will then escort Mancao on a Philippine Airlines flight back to Manila.

According to NBI spokesperson Ricardo Diaz, Mancao will be treated as "no turncoat witness but a threat to his life."

Diaz, also chief of the bureau's Anti-Terrorism Division, said there seemed to be no more legal impediment for Mancao's return. He said Mancao's travel documents were already in their hands.

Corrections

IN THE MAY 27 ISSUE, a front-page article—"3 agencies, Senate probing sex videos"—contained the erroneous subhead, "PDEA announces China, inc." The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency announced Dr. Hayden Kho Jr., his mother Irene and actress Katrina Halili...not Eric Johnston Chua.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a caption on Page A10 misspelled the name of a cosmetic surgeon. The cosmetic surgeon's name is Vicki...not Vicky...Belo.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 2 ISSUE, the "Inner Awareness" column of Isidro T. Gerilla on Page C6 of the Lifestyle section—"How science and religion affect our beliefs"—commented the year when Christopher Columbus made his historic voyage to prove that the world was round and not flat. The year was 1492—not 1992. The same column also reiterated that Columbus circumnavigated the world.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, the "On Target" column of Ramon Tulfo on Page A19 of the Metro section—"Presidential anti-crime agency is a joke"—misstated that President Macapagal-Arroyo went to the house of former President Fidel Ramos in Mahtang and made peace with him regarding the recent Lakas-Kampi-CMD merger over a bottle of cognac. Those who met with Ramos were Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Gabriel Claudio. President Arroyo was not at the meeting in the wee hours of the morning.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Industrial Street, Makati City, fax No. 897-47-02/04, e-mail address dayd@inquirer.com.ph.

Corrections about lack of fairness or other errors may be sent to the Publisher, e-mail address: lyuatco@inquirer.com.ph or fax No. 897-47-03/06 Attn: The Publisher. His phone number is 897-0000 local 300.

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US: Where you find Jollibees …

From page A1

Dhanid Mindanao, where US Special Forces are training the Philippine military to root out terrorists—not only by traditional warfare but also with financial and community development.

It's similar to the counterinsurgency strategy the United States has been pushing in Iraq and Afghanistan for years, as he told Inquirer last week.

Best indicator

That's where the Jollibee connection came in.

Joe Lindborg, interim director for the US Agency for International Development in the Philippines, said he stopped where Jollibee had opened in Mindanao as "one of the best indicators of success."

"Where you find a Jollibee, you find enough security for the food enough rich appetite by the private sector to begin to invest and create jobs," Lindborg told reporters.

"Because ultimately the issue in Mindanao are not just about security but they're also about development," he said.

The Pentagon cites Mindanao as an example of where US efforts to train and advise other nations' armed forces work well.

At a Monday news conference in Manila, US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he had asked for hundreds of millions of dollars in the Pentagon's 2010 budget to build similar so-called military-to-military efforts around the world.

Sensitive to sovereignty

"We have to be very sensitive to their sovereignty and their domestic politics," Gates said in the first visit to the Philippines by a US defense secretary in nearly a decade.

"And so, we will move with these various countries at a pace that is comfortable for them. We have to look at this I think in the long term, and the stronger the foundation we can build under these relationships the longer they are likely to last and the more effective they will be," he said.

Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto C. Teodoro Jr. agreed.

"For me, it is the range and scope of our relationship which is more important than the amount of assistance given by one government or the other," he said at the news conference.

The United States has pumped about $7 billion in economic assistance into its former colony since 1946, Lindborg said.

US troop level

Neither Gates nor Teodoro spoke about the issue of whether the United States plans to cut its troop levels in the Philippines, as is speculated.

Some 600 US troops are stationed in the Philippines, mostly in Mindanao.

Asked about former US ambassador, Teodoro mostly said he planned to "fill in gaps as they come."

A senior US defense official said Gates and Teodoro did not discuss troop levels at closed-door meetings during the three hours the Pentagon chief was on the Philippines.

While in Manila, Gates also confirmed that North Korea appeared to be ramping up its military activity with potential long-range missiles test is coming weeks.

It would be the second long-range missile launch since a flurry of short-range missile tests over the last week.

"We have seen some signs that they may be doing something with another Taepodong missile," Gates said, referring to the type of long-range weapon that North Korea used.

"But at this point it's not clear what they'll [...]

"is going to do," he said.

Suspicions

Most of Gates' views and indeed trip, however, focused on the Philippine-US counterinsurgency efforts against al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf, Jemaah Islamiyah and other extremists.

American officials said they initially found many of the most explosives from Philippine that the US military was now dealing with in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We've been able to show them through our actions over the years that we don't have any ulterior motives and that our whole purpose [in Mindanao] is to assist them," said Army Gen. Bill Caldwell, commander of the Joint Special Operations Task Force in the Philippines.

"It's their fight. … And that's how we've been able to show the people that there's nothing sinister," he said.

Much of the military mission has dealt with training and sharing intelligence, Lindborg said.

One major difference between the counterinsurgency efforts in the Philippines and those in Iraq and Afghanistan is that Filipino leaders have been the more aggressive about saying no make their own decisions safe, according to the cabinet.

"I think with combined efforts with development and security-related cooperation, we are making a difference," Lindborg said.

Jollibees aside, the fight remains far from over. "Serious challenges remain," he said. AP

No survivors feared …

From page A1

declined in the de Janeiro, was to take a connecting flight from Paris to Manila.

The French Foreign ministry number of the Philippine Embassy in Paris of the Filipino's identity but did not give his address in the Philippines. Jaguaru's ship containing computer also confirmed Jaguaru was on board Flight 447.

The Paris-based officers of the Finance and the local shipping agency have communicated with the family of Jaguaru.

The IBA said it would extend assistance to Jaguaru's family.

Worst since 2001

If there are no survivors, it would be the world's worst aviation disaster since 2001.

Brazilian Air Force spokesperson Jorge Amaral said the seats were spotted by search planes early Tuesday morning. Also spotted were small white pieces of debris, material that may be metallic, and signs of oil and kerosene, which is used as jet fuel.

The debris was found about 650 kilometers northeast of the Brazilian archipelago of Fernando de Noronha.

French investigators said a series of extraordinary events likely brought the airliner down.

Investigators zeroed in on the search area, considered by some to be a "graveyard" for planes because of its violent storms.

No sign of terrorism

The 4-year-old Airbus jet was last heard from at 0214 GMT Monday (10:14 a.m. on Monday in Manila).

Investigators on both sides of the ocean zeroed through the night to determine what brought it down—wind and hail from towering thunderheads or lightning, or a catastrophic combination of factors.

French Defense Minister Herve Morin said "we have no signs so far" indicating terrorism was involved, but told French radio "all hypotheses must be studied."

French military spokesperson Christophe Prazuck said fuel readings made the search difficult, with heavy clouds forcing search planes to fly very low over the water and limiting their line of sight.

"For the time being we can't find anything," he said. "There are a lot of squalls, a lot of storms."

Every once debris is found, the rescuers' mark will be updated.

"The research area overlaps an underwater mountain range as big as the Andes," Prazuck said. "The underwater landscape is very steep."

US help

French police were studying passengers' lists and maintenance records, and preparing to take DNA from passengers' relatives, to help identify any bodies.

US President Barack Obama told French television station that Washington was ready to do everything necessary to find out what happened to the missing plane.

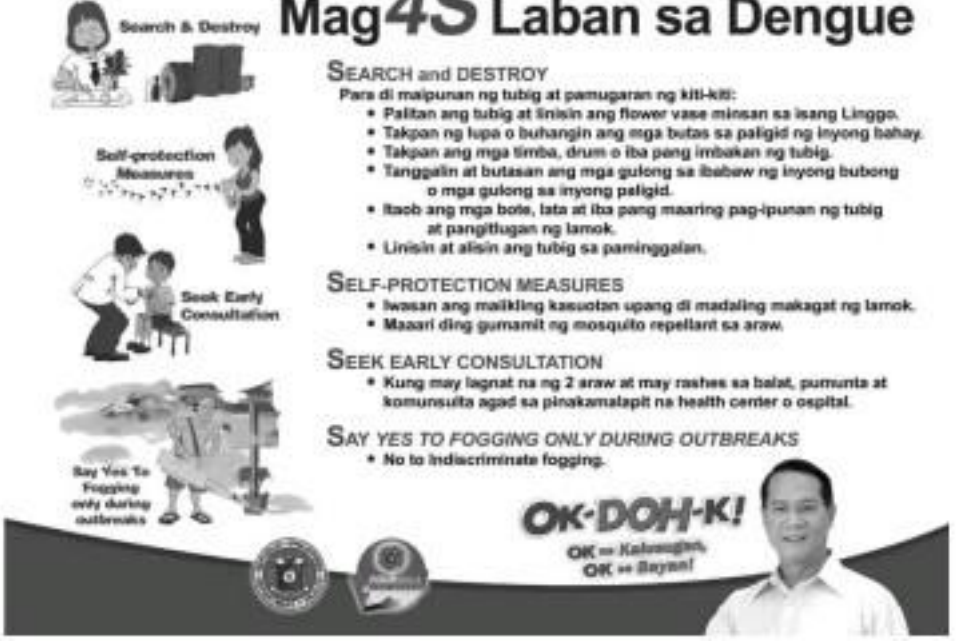
Berbue said officials didn't think that lightning, even from a fierce tropical storm, could have brought down the aircraft.

"There really had to be a succession of extraordinary events or for sake to explain this situation," he said.

He said "the race against the clock has begun" to find the plane's two black boxes, which emit signals up to 30 days.

With nothing more to go on than the last point where Flight 447 made contact, search teams have set an immense area of open ocean, with depths as much as 15,000 feet (4,570 meters).

The plane's 228 passengers included 126 men, 82 women, seven children and a baby. There were 61 French citizens, 58 Brazilians, 26 Germans, nine Chinese and nine Italians. A handful or number of citizens from 27 other countries also were on the passenger list, including two Americans. Reports from Gordon B. Arsenio, AP-AFP Reuters



Battle of surveys: Villar is top choice in SWS poll

By Christine O. Avendaño

EVEN IF HE WAS BEING PELTED and in the Senate for the C-5 extension road controversy, Sen. Manuel Villar, is the top choice for president today, according to the Senate Social Weather Stations survey which he himself commissioned.

The survey released yesterday by Villar's office, showed the senator got the nod of 33 percent of the 5,000 respondents polled nationwide by the SWS from April 30 to May 6.

The win is six percent jump from the 26-percent approval rating Villar got in the SWS poll taken in February, according to the Villar news release.

Villar's office admitted that the former Senate president had commissioned the survey. An aide of Villar told the senator's office had authority from the SWS to release the one-page result. The release did not include details of the survey.

When contacted, the SWS refused to confirm or deny the existence of the survey and the polling outfit referred the inquirers to its website, which did not mention the survey.

The release of the SWS result came a day after the release of a Pulse Asia survey conducted latest last month (May 4-17) showing Villar among the five leading presidential contenders to what is said to be a tight presidential race as Filipinos remain divided when it comes to their choice of the next president.

Of the 1,200 adults interviewed by Pulse Asia nationwide from May 4 to 17 for their choice of the next president, 28 percent for Vice President Noli de Castro, 17 percent picked Sen. Francis Escudero, 15 percent went for deposed President Joseph Estrada, 14 percent preferred Villar, and 13 percent picked Sen. Mar Roxas.

The Pulse Asia survey margin of error is plus or minus three percent.

The question posed to the respondents in the Villar-commissioned SWS survey was who they will pick as a president from a list of nine candidates should the election be held today.

Trailing Villar in SWS survey was De Castro with 18 percent, down by a single point from the 19 percent he got in February.

De Castro was followed by Escudero and Estrada, both with 14 percent.

Ten percent voted for Sen. Loren Legarda, nine percent for Roxas, six percent for Sen. Panfilo Lacson, two percent for Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay and one percent for Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair Bayani Fernando.

The survey had a margin of error of plus and minus 1.5 percentage points.

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SC lets Villar trial continue

By Marvyn Bordadora

SEN. MANUEL VILLAR'S TRIAL FOR alleged unethical conduct will continue in the Senate committee of the whole after the Supreme Court has seen no immediate need to issue a temporary restraining order to halt the proceedings.

Supreme Court spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez said the high tribunal resolved yesterday the Senate committee of the whole's comment on Villar's petition for a TRO and is declaring that the proceedings were not moot and academic.

In voiding the dismissal of Villar's petition, the Senate committee invoked the separation of powers of the different branches of government.

It also said the Senate's internal rules were not subject to judicial review.

The Supreme Court gave Villar and his allies in the Senate minority bloc 10 days to reply to the committee of the whole's comment, Marquez said reporters.

"The court has not seen the urgency for the issuance of a TRO," he said.

"The court is very much aware of that, that the Senate is proceeding with the trial," he added.

But Marquez said the Supreme Court could still issue a TRO pending the proceedings on Villar's petition.

"There could still be because there's a pauyon for a TRO. So anytime a TRO could still be issued considering the petition and the comment filed," Marquez said.

In its comment against Villar's petition, the committee of the whole, among other things, said it did not commit a grave abuse of discretion when it went ahead with the proceedings against the former Senate president.

'Kangaroo court'

It was Villar, it said, who had declined that he would participate in an investigation of the "Senate committee itself into the respondent committee of the whole to hear and adjudicate the charges against him."

"[Petitioner], in making such a claim, conveniently did not mention that it was precisely in response to the wishes of petitioner Senator Villar that the respondent committee of the whole was constituted after he described the ethics committee as a kangaroo court," the committee said.

Villar is being investigated by his peers for an alleged double entry in the national budget for the same road project that he said benefit his real estate companies.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal also charged that Mr. Villar had caused the diversion of the C-5 road extension project to pass through his properties in Las Piñas City in order to increase their value and collect right of way payments.

In its comment to Villar's petition to the Supreme Court, the committee of the whole said that it merely adopted the rules of the ethics committee contrary to the assertion of Villar and his allies that the rules were changed to ensure a finding of guilty against Villar.

The committee also said there was no need to republish the rules as insisted by the petitioners.

It said that Villar had yet to avail himself of remedies available to him—such as a motion for reconsideration before the committee of the whole—as a respondent in the ethics case.

"Having failed to avail of a speedy and adequate remedy available to him, that is, filing a motion for reconsideration, the instant petition should be dismissed," the committee said.

The committee also ordered that the principle of separation of powers be respected by the high court.

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Health Advisory

Influenza A (H1N1) Alert/Response Level System in School

Prepared by:
National Center for Disease Prevention and Control
National Center for Health Promotion

ALERT/ RESPONSE	ALERT/RESPONSE LEVEL			
	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
Situation	No confirmed case of Influenza A (H1N1) in the Philippines	Confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in the country according to DOH No confirmed case in the school No community human to human transmission	Confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in the country according to DOH Confirmed case in the school No reported community level transmission as declared by DOH	Confirmed cases in the country Confirmed community level transmission as declared by the DOH
RESPONSE	Keep updated about the status & extent of Influenza A (H1N1) globally IEC campaign on proper hand washing, proper hygiene & cough manners Make available hygiene & sanitation facilities Line list students who have history of travel to countries with reported confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) virus infection Precautionary measures during school gathering	Level I Response PLUS: Fever surveillance Line list of students & faculty manifesting influenza-like illness Monitoring trend, cause, status of absentees (students/faculty) While in school, persons identified to have signs & symptoms of ILI, isolate them in a designated room before sending home Students/faculty with signs & symptoms of ILI shall not report to school but inform the school physician/MHO for proper advice Establish referral system with health care facilities Report to DOH.	Level II Response PLUS: Suspension of classes in the affected school Report to DOH	Suspension of classes in the affected area
Declaration of Suspension of Classes	No suspension of classes	No suspension of classes	If one school has confirmed positive case of novel influenza A (H1N1), the School Principal can declare the suspension of classes If two or more schools in one city or municipality have confirmed positive case of novel influenza A (H1N1), the Division Superintendent can declare the suspension of classes in the affected schools and adjacent areas; or depending on the local situation, in the entire city or municipality The Higher Education Institution Heads can declare suspension of classes in their respective schools	If there is community level transmission in a city or municipality or several cities municipalities, the Division Superintendent can declare the suspension of classes in the affected cities or municipalities; or depending on local situation, in the entire province If there is community level transmission in two or more provinces, the Regional Director of DepEd/CHED/TESDA can declare the suspension of classes in the affected provinces; or depending on local situation, in the entire region The Higher Education Institution Heads can declare suspension of classes in their respective schools

Confirmation of cases as well as community level transmission shall come from the Department of Health. The school administrator shall coordinate with DOH.

The Secretary of DepEd/Chairperson of CHED/Director Gen. of TESDA can suspend classes at any stage depending on the information or recommendation provided by the DOH.

Conditions when to lift the suspension

Schools may open 10 calendar date from the date of suspension of classes provided students, faculty, and non-teaching personnel with influenza-like symptoms or confirmed cases remain isolated at home or at designated health facilities.

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SC submits 6 choices for 2 vacant SC seats

By Norman Bordadora

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERday came up with six choices for consideration of the Judicial and Bar Council for the two vacancies in the US-sane tribunal.

In an en banc session yesterday, the Supreme Court justices gave Court of Appeals Justices Josefina Balangit eight votes; CA Justice Mario Villarama, seven votes; Sandiganbayan Justice Francisco Villaruz, seven votes; lawyer Rodolfo Bolivar, six votes; CA Justice Romeo Callejo Sr. and Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera, six votes; and CBD law school dean Sedfrey Ordoñez, five votes.

The JBC rules state that the council would give due weight to the choices of the Supreme Court for the filling up of its vacancies.

The JBC is the constitutionally mandated body that screens applicants and comes up with a shortlist of nominees for the President's consideration.

There are two vacancies in the Supreme Court following the retirement of Justices Alicia Austria-Martinez and Dante Tinga in April and in May respectively.

BI, airline execs to iron out kinks with new forms

TOP IMMIGRATION AND AIRLINE officials will meet today to iron out the kinks involving the introduction of the machine-readable arrival and departure cards, the Bureau of Immigration said yesterday.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan and officers of the Airlines Operators Council were scheduled to meet to discuss the airlines' concern on the arrival/departure cards, which the AOC had reportedly opposed.

The business card is introduced as the machine-readable forms to combat red tape, international covenants and other threats. It said the new forms were "in step with international aviation standards while promoting traveler safety and travel comfort."

Immigration antiterrorism chief Sammy Meñaba said that while it does not have a three-month supply of the cards as the airlines had asked, the bureau has a "sufficient" supply. There, he said, have been distributed to travel agencies and the airlines, including their stations abroad.

He said the shift to the machine-readable forms is another component of the commissioner's "pro-active reform programs intended to cut processing time in the bureau and give better services to the people."

Business as usual for GM in RP

AUTOMAKER GENERAL MOTORS WILL continue its operations in Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, despite the bankruptcy petition filed by its parent company in the US, GM Philippines said in a statement yesterday.

"It is important to know that only GM's US operations are part of the chapter 11 process, and that GM's US court filing should have no direct impact on Asia Pacific and Asean regions which includes the Philippines. Our operations will continue to meet consumer demand," GM said.

The company said that GM's operations in Asean which includes the Philippines are not part of the court restructuring process. "Our domestic operations continue without interruption with the goal of meeting the needs of local consumers," it said.

GM assured that its Philippines dealers would continue to sell and service all Chevrolet vehicles.

It said that GM warranties on new and existing products remained legally binding. "GM Philippines is honoring its warranties without interruption," GM said.

GM Philippines also assured its current and future customers that GM Philippines' warranty coverage is absolutely safe and sound, now and well into the future. "The quality of our products is the bedrock of our business. GM Philippines has always taken care of our customers and stood behind our products—and we will continue to do so," it said.

GM replacement parts will also continue to be available for reliable service and warranty work on vehicles. "We do not expect interruption of parts availability in GM Philippines (Chevrolet) dealerships. Individual supplier concerns will be individually addressed," GM said.

The company said that financing from bank or other financial institutions for Chevrolet vehicles would continue.

Coins mutilated into plumbing parts

AN ANTI-SMUGGLING GROUP SAYS A Taiwanese businessman has been accused of extracting bronze from local coins to make parts for plumbing.

The Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group says Zhuges were filed Monday after agents found stacks of mutilated Philippine coins during a former rail town months ago. The Pasig-based group Philippine Metal Industry Development Specialist Inc. found the plumbing accessories mixed were made of bronze from 25-centavo coins, worth about one half US cent.

The group says Ming Thai Liang, president of Ming Tsan Liang Manufacturing Corp., and five of his employees were charged with destroying legal tender or coins.

AP

DepEd welcomes 'constructive criticisms'

By Philip C. Tubeza

MIS'SAID-HAPPEN.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus yesterday said that the Department of Education (DepEd) did not tolerate errors in public school textbooks but admitted that sometimes these mistakes escaped their evaluators.

Lapus said the DepEd welcomed "constructive criticisms" but he wondered why self-styled "book heroes" like author Asteroids Calipjo Go never sat down with DepEd officials to help correct public school textbooks.

"We do not tolerate errors in textbooks and we have procedures when we noticed a typo in the text of a certain school textbook where (God) came to us and presented its errors and we rectified them. We are objective about this," Lapus said.

In an article published in the business on Sunday, Go criticized errors in five public school English textbooks, till titled "English for You and Me" and published by Book Wise Publishing House Inc.

"He should meet with our officials and show these errors. He welcome all constructive criticisms with intention to help," said Lapus, who added that Go has not talked to DepEd officials about errors in public school textbooks.

"He came forward and presented all the errors (in the class of the textbooks) he found and that (is) all the others, he has not done that. If it's really well-meaning, we'll welcome that," Lapus said.

Trying its best

He said the DepEd was trying its best to iron out these errors and had enlisted the help of prestigious universities to screen the textbooks. However, Lapus admitted that even these institutions make mistakes.

"You can only put up a system with evaluators with inspection in the textbooks in the city. At the present, we want an institution to look at it but, sometimes even the institutions have their own errors, even in their own in-house (publications)," Lapus said.

"And they say, all textbooks have errors ... but when you see three, no act. We have a system that we can keep improving," he added.

Lapus declined to comment on the complaint of playwright Zeltia Asis Tan that her entry was "sterilized" and used without her permission in "English for You and Me" textbook for Grade VI. He said he did not know the specific details of that issue.

In a letter to the Inquirer, Rosario A. Pilar, executive director of the DepEd-Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS), said that Tan's complaint should be answered by the textbook's author, Elodie Cuda.

She said that when the book was submitted for evaluation, the author signed a declaration stating that she had "obtained all the necessary permissions and clearances for borrowed and adapted text and art."

"The publisher also issued a Warranty Certificate and Copyright Authorization, which warrants that 'we shall indemnify and hold harmless the purchaser and its employees and officers against all third-party claims for infringement of copyright arising from the use of the above textbooks and teacher's manuals or any part thereof," Pilar said.

"The proper action for the RICD, therefore, is to refer and endorse the demand of Ms. Tan's counsel to the publisher and its commissioned author. To do otherwise and put the onus on IMCS is really supplants is contrary to law, policy and practice."

Lower costs

Lapus said he had "rational, (but) not 'rationalized' the textbook procurement process at the DepEd, with the cost of a text book now down to P44.15 compared with P107.27 in 1998.

"That's why many are angry (maybe) what happened before and who financed on that before the 'this' that's their procurement process and competitive bidding. Before, it was worse ... each school division or region bought its own textbooks. How about the quality? (Imagine) the graft," Lapus said.

Playwright's complaint

"It took time for us to rationalize. Before, you could be a lousy printer and be made to win through book design. The stolen content could be yours although book design is not protected. Because of the proposal (cost), 'We took (the) story and that's why there are people angry," he added.

Lapus declined to comment on the complaint of playwright Zeltia Asis Tan that her entry was "sterilized" and used without her permission in "English for You and Me" textbook for Grade

Ready to die? torturers told Fil-Am activist

From page A1

Citing the affidavit submitted by Rosas' petition for a writ of amparo, the military group Bayan Muna Representative Satur Ocampo accused the armed forces of being behind the activist's abduction.

"There is credible basis to say that Rosas was abducted by the military as part of the government's counter-insurgency operations," Bayan secretary general Nerie Bayot in a statement.

"The abduction and torture were clear violations of her rights," he said.

Bayot, a member of the Rosas' lawyers, said that in the early morning of May 25, Rosas was blindfolded as her hands were bound by a rubber plastic as well as the handcuffs they used on her.

One of her interrogators even called her on the phone after she was dropped off, Bayan also said.

"The Arroyo government must not only address this issue. For the past two days, the military has aggressively encamped to cover up the incident," Bayot said.

He said the Presidential Commission on Human Rights had dismissed the abduction as a "fabrication," and Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita had never ordered an investigation.

Military 'alarmed'

Asked in comment, the military said it had nothing to do with the purported abduction and torture of Rosas, and that an inquiry into the matter had been initiated.

Lt. Col. Romeo Brawner Jr., the AFP spokesperson, said the business that Lt. Gen. Ismael Carbonilla, the chief of the Northern Luzon Command, was "alarmed" by the disappearance of Rosas and two others.

He said Carbonilla had ordered Maj. Gen. Ralph Villanueva, the chief of the 7th Infantry Division, to investigate the matter.

"He (Villanueva) said he had heard about the disappearance and he immediately ordered an investigation among his men. The results were negative," Brawner said.

On the other hand, Brawner said, the military leadership was "puzzled" by the alleged abduction and disappearance of Rosas.

"We are wondering why the would be abducted then released within 24 hours and make no statement right after the incident," Brawner said. With a report from Alcuin Papa

Schools nourish poor pupils' minds—and bodies

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

JALA-JALA, RIZAL—IT TOOK 8-year-old Shaina Mae Magbiran more than half an hour of walking to reach Pagbalungan Elementary School. To arrive on time, she would usually skip breakfast.

But for some 80 days last school year, Shaina Mae and 116 other pupils in the remote public school in this poor town three hours drive away from Metro Manila were served free noodles for breakfast.

The school is among the beneficiaries of the Brookfun Feeding Program (BFP), one of the nutrition projects of the Department of Education (DepED), where pupils in low-performing schools are given noodles (sari-sari) every day.

"It's delicious," Shaina Mae said.

She is just one of the more than 80,000 beneficiaries of the program last year, according to the DepED's Dr. Juan Antolo.

Improvements

The free breakfast is served to Grade 1 pupils, as well as to those from higher grades who are underweight.

Pagbalungan Elementary School's terminology, absorbed that of the 45 underweight pupils who joined the program, only 12 remained with below normal body weights.

Shaina Mae herself became half a kilo heavier when the last school year ended.

The school principal Ednelson Ilao said teachers' tender love and care also accounted for the improvements.

The nutrients, many living far from the school, formed groups to take turns in cooking the noodles in school in time for the pupils' breakfast. They also brought vegetables or eggs with the noodles to make the meal more nutritious.

Ilao said the cover had a hand time in asking the mothers to help in the school not only to cook but also to decorate rooms, even during the school break.

Mothers volunteer to sweep the school's six classrooms, wash plates at the canteen and run the giant outside.

Cheryl Rodriguez, 38, whose four children study at the school, said, "It is also our obligation as our children, this is why we are helping."

Rice boosts hopes

In Dumalinao City, 30-year-old Carlo Hinaloc is also happy he has received her school year-free rice from Dumalinao Central Elementary School, one of the 18,312 public schools targeted by the Food for School Program (FSP) for the year.

DepED secretary Jesli Lapus said the FSP had been successful in addressing malnutrition. In a monitoring report in 2006-2007, her office noted a 3- to 9-percent decrease in the number of undernourished pupils because of DepED's program.

"We did not have to buy rice for those days the school gave us this rice," said Palmos, who lives with his parents under a pedestrian overpass beside the Dumalinao Port.

Carlo's mother Monica said the money she saved for those days she did not have to buy rice was used to buy and cook vegetables instead.

There were days when she also shared the packs of rice Carlo had brought home with another family living with them under the pedestrian overpass.

Monica said she was happy every day that Carlo brought home a pack of rice because she had something to feed the rest she hoped would somehow take the family away from the street where they live.

The small things they receive leave them poor families with big hopes.

DepEd food aid feeding political ambitions?

From page A1

"The incidence of diseases and the survival rate are directly affected by hunger and malnutrition," Lapus said.

The DepEd reports that as a result of the initiatives, the achievement rate of public grade school students rose from 59 percent in 2003 to almost 65 percent in 2006, malnutrition levels shrank from 22 percent to 17 percent, while school dropouts fell from 6.98 percent to 5.99 percent.

But with elections just around the corner, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. fears that the rice distribution program will be used as "advance (for administration's political agenda."

Failure to reallocate

Pimentel aired the same warning two years ago during debates on the national budget before the midterm balloting.

Former administration senators warned but failed to reallocate the P4.7 billion budget for the FSP to other school projects. The senator bulked.

"There is a strong ground to believe that the fund will be used by administration candidates to buy votes in the coming elections," Pimentel said.

One program scrapped

Already, one feeding program has been scrapped following allegations of shortchanging pupils in the nutrition program.

The P427-million Brothers Heart Program, which seeks to serve malunggay-fortified noodles to 426,277 pupils in 5,296 schools in 13 provinces for 80 days, was allegedly overpriced, according to Senator Ralph Recto, who is one of the leaders, Estimated Trading.

Estimated subsequently backed out and Guingona resigned after failing to get the contract, which was awarded to Jessica Manufacturing Corp.

Not nutritious

The Jessica product, Rakks claimed, is not nutritious and the P22 per 100-gram pack contract is way above the market price.

He was also exasperated that the DepEd was imposing "confusing requirements" to make their lives tougher.

Cadiz said the requirement that noodles have fresh eggs but was unclear on whether these should be a separate component in the package.

The DepEd later clarified that "eggs should be added to the dry mixtures of noodles."

"Isn't egg, aside from flour, a basic ingredient of noodles?" asked "rick books" (insider Asterios Calipjo-Go.

The eggs, malunggay and kraft costs account for the P22 noodle packs, according to the DepEd.

Freight costs jacked up

Cadiz said the freight costs were jacked up. Using a weighing scale, he showed in an Inquirer reporter that two DepEd vouchers for the DepEd brought in 2,007 that weighed 684 grams cost the government 16 centavos in freight.

Jessica charged a freight cost of P5.46 per pack that weighs 96 grams, he said.

Following the attack, Lapus announced last week that he had canceled the Jessica deal and was calling for another tender.

Exploited in two ways

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teddy Casiño said that the rice distribution program could be exploited in two ways.

First, local politicians could pose themselves as the donors of the rice and the source of the program. "Sir dare ang political ends," he said.

"Second, the P2.3-billion funding for the FSP could also be "a source of campaign funds," he added.

Casiño is not vigilant, this could be the first time food stash of 20133," Casiño said, referring to the still unresolved P728 million bribe at fund allegedly misused during the 2004 national elections.

Politicking

Lapus dismissed Casiño's claim as mere "politicking."

"Your honour there will be no election, it does not mean that we have to be on a stomach. If we operate the government, we are delivering service efficiently, we will be remained in my duty."

In fact, the program is getting full steam.

To reverse undernourishment, a complete 120-day rice distribution is slated, said Dr. Juan Antolo, head of the nutrition division of the Bureau of Health and Nutrition Disorders.

The last time the FSP managed to extend the meal 120-day distribution in the five-year history was during school year 2006-07, immediately preceding the May 2007 elections.

The FSP was implemented for 93 days during its pilot year in 2003-05, 98 days in 2005-06, 94 days in 2006-07 and only 26 days in 2006-07.

The program aims to help ease hunger in food-poor areas as well as encourage school attendance by distributing a bite of rice every day to public grade school students.

'Bad idea'

The President approves the areas where the FSP will be implemented. Cabinet Secretary Eduardo Ermita includes schools from the 20 most food-poor provinces, the 100 most food-poor municipalities and 19 depressed barangays in Metro Manila.

Former Education Undersecretary Jose Miguel Luz said he had objected to the FSP when it was launched in December 2003.

"We were already saying that this is a bad idea," said Luz, now president of the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction.

Among others, Luz said schools had to manage space and accommodate teachers and set up repacking area, which often was of low quality.

Since families don't live on the street, he said, parents had to send it for other needs.

"If you want to do rice distribution, don't use the schools because the schools are not equipped for this," Luz said. "Essentially, it takes you away from what you're supposed to be do, lag—teaching."

WHAT WENT BEFORE

ON MAY 16, FILIPINO-American lifeline Rosas was abducted in Barangay Sapang Palay in San Jose, Bulacan, at around 2 p.m.

According to a report from the human rights group Bayan patriot, the abductors, armed and wearing ski masks, arrived in two motorcycles and a Kia Sorento van without a license plate and forcibly took Rosas and two companions identified as Jeanette Corderos and John Edward Andrin.

Rosas, a member of the cultural organization Hahu Ani in Los Angeles, was in Bulacan on a volunteer health worker.

She surfaced early on May 25, six days after her disappearance. Details about her release were not known, her companions remained missing.

Days later, a copy of Rosas' petition for a writ of amparo and a writ of habeas data filed May 28 was posted by the Bayan Muna Representative Group (Bayan) on its official website (http://www.bayan.ph).

Military personnel

The respondents included President Macapagal-Arroyo, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao, and Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit, commanding general of the Philippine Army.

In the petition, Rosas said she and her two companions were abducted by "about 15 armed men with strong evidence of being military personnel" and "were forcibly brought to a place which is strongly believed to be Fort Magsaysay."

Rosas said the "undercover internal interrogation and was tortured."

Bayan also posted a copy of Rosas' unofficial certificate of detention dated May 28, showing that she had multiple abrasions on her wrists and knees and that she was diagnosed to be suffering from acute stress disorder.

The petition and the abductee also took them for a camera, an iPod, a laptop, her journal, medical instruments and medicine, and P15,000 in cash.

Serious doubts

On May 27, the Philippine Human Rights Commission (PHRC) issued a statement saying there was "high probability" that the abduction of Rosas and her companions was "fabricated."

It said it found out a single report of the incident filed in the municipality of La Paz.

The PHRC also said that "as a policy" is considered "with serious doubt" all allegations of human rights violations from groups like Bayan Muna and Bayot, "given their open support to and close ties to the incoming up with additional allegations."

Kampanya assailed the PHRC, saying a simple check with Camp Crame would have shown that Chief Insp. Ronaldo B. Fernandez of the Police Anti-Crime had reported Rosas' abduction.

Fernandez's report was dated May 25. Alicia Victoria, reporter Bonnevie.

Sources: Bayan, Agusyong Mabuhayan nakaka, Kampanya, Inquirer database, Bulatlat.com

Socialites' swindle spurs Senate probe

By Jaime Laude
Legarda and Gotamede duped "dozens" of rich owners of their jewelry worth "hundreds of millions of pesos."

Among the expensive jewelry that Gotamede got from her victims were "custom pieces, antiques and those purchased abroad."

Socialites allegedly victimized by Gotamede turned up at the Senate session yesterday in time for Legarda's privilege speech.

Seen at the Senate gallery were Agnes T. Hufbedeas, whom Legarda identified as the honorary consul to Gambia, Ching Cruz, Deborah Pidlaje and Barbara Tolentino.

They all sat in a row, wearing expensive business suits, and were seen nodding or quietly conferring with one another as they listened to Legarda denounce Gotamede on the floor.

The scam

Pretending to be a buyer of expensive jewelry, the Gotamedes will get exquisite pieces of jewelry from owners or fellow traders in exchange for guarantee checks or "certificates," Legarda said.

With the help of her cohorts, Gotamede would "pawn it up and run of jewelry in exchange for quick cash, allegedly conspiring with pawnshops which do not even bother to verify or establish the ownership of these pieces of jewelry," the senator said.

"This shady character seems her way in to the confidence of her victims, using her long-term relationship with known society personalities, tapping them to instill confidence and trust in her," she said.

According to Legarda, Gotamede is a former professor in De La Salle University and used to serve as chief of staff of socialite Emmanuel "Baby" Arenas and at one point even worked as a staff member of then Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

"I don't know her (Gotamede) personally, but I have seen her a few times in political events," she said.

Paying for jewelry they own

Worse, Gotamede's cohorts, who included her own father, would trade and use the pawn tickets, "sometimes even crooking their victims to again pay for those pawn tickets," Legarda said.

"The victims, in their desperate attempt to partly recover what they have lost, are hard-pressed to shell out more money to these swindlers just to redeem these pieces of jewelry which they own in the first place," she said.

In some instances, these individuals would buy the pieces of jewelry from the swindlers at low prices and sell them to the victims at higher prices.

Legarda said Gotamede had closed the accounts from which the latter issued her checks and, in some occasions, prodded small investors to entrust their money to her in exchange for guaranteed checks, representing fixed returns on their investments.

Gotamede would close the accounts from which the checks were issued, Legarda said.

While cases have been filed against her, Gotamede had petitioned the court "to be declared in a state of impotence of payments," saying she "have excess of accounting but debts."

Investigate pawnshops

Gotamede, who is locked up at Makati Medical Center or Chinese General Hospital on estafa arrest, had also asked the court to recognize her alleged ill health that prevents her from fulfilling her obligations with her creditors.

"I am appalled at the notion that these shady practices go scot-free. How can these unscrupulous persons perpetrate these crimes with impunity? How could they possess the ability to do all of these fraudulent and deceitful business practices. They must be stopped!" Legarda said.

During interpellation, Legarda said Gotamede's victims identified two pawnshops that got their jewelry—Cecilio Pawnshop and Investa Pawnshop.

In her speech, the senator underscored the need to "take a closer look into the operations of the pawnshop business."

She said both pawnshops and individuals should be prevented from buying fraudulently acquired pieces of jewelry.

She also said the operations and practices of pawnshops should be closely monitored and regulated by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Department of Finance or the Securities and Exchange Commission.

'Talk to my lawyer'

After her speech, Legarda approached the well-heeled women in the Senate gallery who took turns hounding the senator.

The women refused to face reporters, telling them to gamit relaxer in "talk to my lawyer" when asked about the cases filed against Gotamede.

Agnes T. Hufbedeas and Ching Cruz, wearing nearly identical suits, waited their eyes on Legarda as reporters gathered around them.

Deborah Pidlaje went as far as describing Gotamede as "gifted and very smart," but stood away when asked more sensitive questions.

Barbara Tolentino also parried queries, saying her lawyer was arriving soon and would entertain questions.

Land titles to the ceiling

Hufbedeas's lawyer, Romulo Espaldon, revealed during an interview before Legarda's speech that their officers were being made to record "nearly P70-P80 million" worth of jewelry that Gotamede allegedly had taken from his client.

Espaldon said Gotamede's husband and father initially offered a settlement to avoid a criminal case.

"They claimed to have titles up to the ceiling. We asked them to come up with a list of assets because they were offering properties in payment," he said.

"We set two deadlines last February, but the list never came," the lawyer added. "I really don't know if they have money or assets to pay. We have searched all over."

In a separate interview, Pidlaje's lawyer, Rodolfo John Paul Palacios Jr., said the pleadings addressed to Gotamede's former residence in Legaspi Village, Makati City had been either "returned or refused."

Honest HK OFW gets cash, solons' commendation

By Nikko Dizon
GIFTS OF LOVE: Cookies, rice cakes and cash are among the gifts that Overseas Filipino Worker Rosalie Perez received from her employer in Hong Kong after she returned the P1,000 she found in the pocket of a pair of jeans she was washing. Perez, who has been working in Hong Kong for 10 years, said she was only doing what was right. She is now back in the Philippines, where she is spending time with her husband and children. PHOTO BY NIKKO DIZON

Rosalie Perez's good deed was first published in the business section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Sen. Francis Escudero yesterday said that his office had communicated with Mildred Perez, an unemployed domestic helper, by phone on Monday, assuring her of a prize in the future, financial assistance in case of a small business and scholarship for her children.

"[Her deed] only shows that Filipinos, however poor and lowly they may be, **wherever they may be, are honest and** morally upright. Perez should be emulated and recognized for what she did morally, **assuring the fair financial return due to it,**" Escudero said in a statement.

For his part, Nueva Ecija Rep. Carlos Padilla on Monday filed a resolution commending Perez for her honesty.

"By returning the money, Perez has demonstrated that the virtue of honesty and **trustworthiness are not lost among the Fil**ipinos even abroad. Moreover, she has set an example, worthy of emulation which deserves the full appreciation and deep gratitude of the Filipino nation," Padilla said in the resolution.

Honest husband

Perez, who is from Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya, said she receive P 800,000 from officials of her province. She is not the only one in her family who has demonstrated honesty.

Her husband Eddie, a tricycle driver, also removed an envelope containing cash to a passenger several months ago, Padilla said.

The passenger, a school official, had dropped an envelope of cash in the tricycle. When Eddie found the envelope, he drove back to Nueva Vizcaya State University, and was able to find his passenger by describing her to the people in the school.

Like his wife, "Eddie did not ask anything but returning the money," Padilla said.

Perez, 36, a mother of two teenagers, has been out of a job since 2007 when the Hong Kong authorities charges against her Hong Kong employers.

She had been rummaging in garbage cans to retrieve soft drink cans, soda cans, cardboard boxes and other recyclables so she could earn money for her needs and to pursue her case in court.

Hong Kong law prohibits foreigners who have sued their employers to take up employment until the case is resolved.

Cookies for honesty

On April 29, Perez said a companion loaned HK$200,000 in cash and checks.

While the generosity sum would have allowed her relief, she instead called up the company whose name was in the documents to return the money.

For her good deed, she was given a can of cookies.

Padilla said he, Nueva Vizcaya Gov. Luisa Cuaresma and Bambang Mayor Benjamin Cuaresma decided to raise at least P300,000 to give to Perez.

Congressional resolution

"It's not a reward. It's a cash award for Mildred. It's up to her if the source is not to fit the needs of her family. If we call it a reward, she might say that she was not asking for payment," Padilla told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

He said he was also working on getting the House of Representatives to approve his resolution commending Perez. The measure, filed on Monday, was read on first reading on the same day although the rules technically require that it be read on Wednesday at the latest.

PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
MEDICARE CIRCULAR
No. 22 s.2009
TO: ALL ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS; ALL PHILHEALTH OFFICES AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED
SUBJECT: GUIDELINES ON DOWNGRADING, CLOSURE/ISSUANCE AND DENIAL OPERATIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS
A. DOWNGRADING OF HCPs
1. A Level 3, Level 2 or Level 1 (L3, L2 or L1) Hospital that was given provisional accreditation due to non-compliance to the requirements or standards of accreditation but failed to comply within the compliance period as prescribed by the Corporation may be downgraded to a level category it is compliant with. This however, shall be done only after submission of a letter of intent (LOI) within the compliance period stating therein that they are amenable to such downgrading. Failure to submit the said document shall result to termination of its provisional accreditation effective on the date of determination by Accreditation Committee.
2. An HCPP applying for expansion but given provisional and/or pre-accreditation inspection was found to be incapable of upgrading the service required of the level category it is applying for, shall follow the guidelines stated hereunder:
a. The HCP shall be informed by the concerned PHIC office two (2) days after receipt of application of the evaluation results on by the assessor during the pre-accreditation inspection and conference on their findings as to deficiencies. Thereafter, HCP shall comply within the prescribed compliance period (PC) as stated;
b. If the HCP cannot comply with the deficiencies they may opt to be downgraded to a level category it is compliant with by submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI) within the reglementary period of compliance, stating therein that they are amenable to such downgrading. Otherwise, the said application shall be denied by the Corporation.
B. CLOSURE/ISSUANCE AND DENIAL OPERATION OF AN HCP
1. Any accredited HCP which plans to close its facility or sell a Cease and Desist Operation Order from DOH shall have its accreditation validity terminated on the same day it shall close/cease and desist its operation. The HCP shall inform the Corporation at least prior to the planned closure/cease operation. The concerned PHIC shall validate the same within three (3) days after receipt of such information and shall immediately inform the Accreditation Department Central Office to effect necessary changes in the database.
2. For any HCP with active accreditation which, upon monitoring, was found to have misrepresented its capacities and failed to give information to the Corporation, the concerned PHILHEALTH personnel shall schedule an effect its validity within the same day the refusal date of closure/cease operation. Immediately thereafter it shall transmit the recommendation to the concerned Central Office for the same information to effect the invalidation of the HCP.
3. Claims paid for admissions during the closure/cease operations, if any, due to failure of the hospital to inform the Corporation as specified, shall be charged to its current claims. If there are no unpaid claims, the same amount shall be collected from the hospital by the Corporation may take it to Court.
4. Any HCP may apply for re-accreditation with the Corporation once it has resumed its operations.
All previous policies and guidelines and other administrative issuances not consistent herewith are hereby rescinded/amended accordingly.
This circular shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from publication in the official gazette or any newspaper of general circulation.
(Sgd.) DR. REY S. KOJIMO
President and CEO
Date Issued: May 22, 2009
(Circular No. 2009-0022)

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OPINION

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Recycled arguments

WHEN SEN. MANUEL VILLAR JR. TOLD THE Inquirer he was confident he would remain a senator because his critics lacked the votes to repel him, he gave a revealing insight into his attitudes towards power and public service. In a nutshell, that attitude relies on the mantra that "politics is a numbers game," one of the most beloved maxims of the peasant dispensation.

EDITORIAL That the Palace loves reducing everything in our political life to a mere battle of logistics, in which loyalty to the country ends where loyalty to party or patron begins, is what makes Villar's satisfaction with the numbers game so troubling. Villar's personal insinuation is as an oppositionist, yet his political attitudes are no different from the administration he claims to oppose.

The past four years have seen every effort to hold the Arroyo administration accountable for its alleged sins of commission and omission; and, in every step, its response has been to crow that regardless of the public interest represented by the issues at hand, it has the numbers to defeat any effort to hold it accountable.

The other components of the Palace plan to counter challenges to its hold on power have clearly become part of the Villar playbook, as well. This playbook has become a highly developed, if predictable one, involving often simultaneous tactics.

There's the use of countering evidence against it with blanket denials of the evidence to buy time to marshal government powers to suppress it. To name another, there's the refusal to confront charges, but instead to employ counter charges by means of astounding the media with scandals as crocks. And then, if necessary, finally confronting the charges, but not in the forum in which such evidence should be sifted through, but in forums of its own choosing.

We have seen all of these Palace-style strategies employed by Villar as he has gone about trying to do damage control over the allegations being made against him and his wife. Obviously he believes that politics is a dirty game, and survival is best guaranteed by fighting fire with fire. But a scorched-earth policy is a dangerous one to employ—not necessarily for the politicians involved, but for the public whom the politicians are supposed to serve.

The country has had its confidence in our leaders and institutions shattered by our leaders refusing to confront allegations of wrongdoing, thereby seeding, once and for all, whether these allegations are serious or not. Instead, the country has seen the power game played at its most reckless and destructive, accomplishing nothing but to reveal just how feeble our institutions are.

Take another argument consistently used by Villar in his defense: that everything he has done, has been with the interest of his constituents in Las Piñas in mind. This is the patronage argument that claims legislators are elected not just to pass laws but to bring home the bacon. It is an argument that overlooks the corrupt—and corrupting—nature of the whole pork barrel system, and also evades the real issue.

The issue is of personal responsibility and culpability for fixing one's pockets while pretending to serve the constituents' interests. Bringing home the bacon does not mean legislators can pad their own bank accounts. The Palace has often defended itself by saying it has delivered in terms of services and infrastructure, security and the overall economy, but at what ultimate cost? Contractors and cuts for friends? Kickbacks for highly placed allies and even top administration officials?

This devious attitude is what fosters the belief that public officials are motivated primarily by private gain. It is not the courageous confrontation of one's foes that is the mark of the true leader who trusts the people and the system to work. It is not the behavior of the innocent, but instead, the nonwrestling that marks the professional dissembler and full-time crook.

Surely a former speaker and Senate president and one who aspires to become president can trust the people to serve as the real jury in this ethics case. No Senate would dare unjustly expel a senator who has stood his ground, and defended himself with the courage of his convictions before his peers.

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Fernando: Whatever happened to loyalty to party?

YOU OF COURSE ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE story of the Little Red Hen who planned, harvested, threshed and cooked the rice while the other barnyard animals did nothing. When the rice was cooked, these other animals ate it, leaving the Little Red Hen hungry. The Tagalogs have a saying for this: "Ako-ang nagsing, ako-ang kumain." (I cooked the rice but somebody else ate it.)

Chairman Bayani Fernando of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) told the Kapihan in Manila last Monday that he felt like the Little Red Hen after the Labor-Lakas merger meeting at the Manila Hotel last week. Vice President Noli de Castro and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro emerged as the frontrunners for the new administration party's standard bearers.

Fernando lamented that neither De Castro nor Teodoro is a member of Lakas-Kampi. The founders and leaders of the two parties, on the other hand, were left out. Former President Fidel V. Ramos, chair emeritus of Lakas, was invited at the last minute as he was unable to attend. Sen. Luis Villafuerte, president of Kampi, bypassed the affair. Former Speaker Jose de Venecia, the Lakas leader who had cobbled together the numbers coalition in the House of Representatives, was not invited. And he, Fernando, a Lakas original and its vice president, as well as a declared presidential aspirant of the past, was left on the "negotiate."

"What happened to loyalty to the party?" he asked. "That is how our politicians enjoy those who worked hard for the party?"

De Castro's Fernando pointed out, although elected in the Lakas ticket, does not want to be identified with the administration party and insists he is an independent. Teodoro is not yet a member of Lakas-Kampi but he is already threatening party members that if he is not chosen as its presidential candidate, he would join another party or run for president as an independent. "What is the message? He got a nomination presented in the Pulse Asia survey of 'presidentiables.'"

Fernando said Teodoro has a history of disloyalty to party. He has deserted his original party, the Nationalist People's Coalition.

And yet Teodoro and De Castro were met with standing ovations by the Lakas-Kampi politicians at the Manila Hotel that Ramos and Villafuerte, the chefs who cooked Lakas and Kampi, denounced as dictated by blackmailing and with no proper considerations of the candidates.

Fernando noted that Teodoro, one of the midwives in the server, got a bigger applause than De Castro, the topnotch doc. Why? "Because he is perceived to have more money," he answered his own question. "Money always attracts more."

Shoulder's membership and loyalty to party be the No. 1 criterion for nominated leaders? Fernando added.

Teodoro may not be a member of Lakas-Kampi but he is loyal to the President, a supporter of the defense secretary said.

But Fernando asked, "Can there be anybody more loyal to President GMA than me? And I am vice president of Lakas. And here I am not in the cold while Teodoro and De Castro dance the top candidacy of my party."

Indeed Fernando not only is among the longest servers in GMA's Cabinet but also the best bright spot in an administration noted for corruption and ineptitude. While local governments' stale and local politicians are splurging and even coddling egotists, Fernando has been cleaning government lands of squatters and city streets of illegal vendors. It is an unpopular job, especially for someone eyeing the presidency (for the man doesn't seem to mind. Some say he is positively manic). But others say that in the midst of a sour leader, somebody who keeps the trains on

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

time, who keeps the streets clean, who keeps the city safe for people to walk in, is a welcome relief. Fernando is not perfect. He has his faults. But who doesn't? Who else is there to run the country? Who else is there to run for president?

As I see it, we need somebody like him at the helm of government if we are to prevent the country from descending into chaos and anarchy. Other politicians coddle squatters and sidewalk vendors because they want their votes, but those are also law-breakers. They are robbing not only sewer and taxpayers of their properties. The laws should be enforced on them.

Don't shed a tear for the squatters. All are given a chance to live in communities complete with sewer and electric connections, a far cry from the squatter colonies where they live in cardboard boxes.

Local governments shouldn't have allowed the proliferation of squatter colonies in the first place. But they did because the congressmen, governors, mayors, vice mayors and councilors needed their votes to stay in their seats.

Unfortunately, squatters are not only a source of votes. The barangay captains and councilmen mercilessly fleece them as well, requiring each family to cough up from P5,000 to P10,000 for the right to build a shanty. They also bill each family a few hundred pesos a month for water and power connections illegally tapped from utility companies. No wonder they fight tooth and nail to prevent demolition operations.

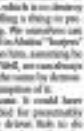
It is also Fernando who has restored sanity in the city streets. He has driven away illegal vendors from major streets. With their wares spread out on the sidewalks, these vendors choke the flow of traffic. If Fernando had not restored the picture, they would have occupied not only the sidewalks but also the streets.

But, the poor need to earn a living. It is for this reason that these folks need to have a chance to ply their trade legally. Existing markets nearby are made to accommodate them or they are relocated to especially designated places. Some need the new arrangements, but those who accepted the government offer are now earning more than they ever did when they were illegal vendors.

It's about time we had a president who is not afraid to do what is right.

Honor

THERE'S THE RUB



Comrade de Dios

SOMETIMES THERE'S VICTORY IN DEFEAT. Sometimes there's life in death.

Such a wonder happened last week in South Korea when former President Roh Moo-hyun leaped to his death after being investigated for corruption. Roh, 62, was a human rights lawyer who was swept to power on the wings of the youth. He was a liberal who pushed for enhancing democracy and ending corruption. This angered the conservative bloc in his country who put back at him when they returned to power.

They accused Roh of accepting $6 million in bribes during his presidency, a thing he vehemently denied. People little evidence for it, they prosecuted the case with zeal, largely to tarnish his name with suggestions of wrongdoing. It was too much for Roh who had devoted his political life toward ending the very thing he was now being accused of. He threw himself off a cliff at the back of his house.

His suicide stunned the nation and sparked an outpouring of grief and anger. Grief at the loss of a decent man, and anger at those who had driven him to it. In death, Roh had not just reclaimed his honor, he had restored the determination of his followers to run his foes higher with him.

It's one of those stories that make you laugh and cry at the same time, glow and squirm at the same time. We own particular grieving and crying are not just over the loss of one such man, though that is more than enough for it. The world having just been pauperized again. They are also over the recognition that something like that is not likely to happen to us over the next thousand years.

Roh's suicide does compel us with the force of a tsunami to examine ourselves and look in the direction to compare South Korea with the Philippines. Or more to the point, to compare ourselves that put a premium on honor with us.

The comparison starts with the amounts. The apparent bribe to Roh was $6 million. Even if true, which can open to challenge, it would have been a drop in the bucket in a country that has produced Samsung. The bribe to Benjamin Abalos in the 2004 was, if I recall right, more than $600 million, if true (though its determination was blocked by the chief executive's thing "executive privilege"). It would have grounded to build a country that has produced only Hanky Monteverde.

For Roh to have done the unthinkable—or what is on for us, Filipinos...which is to destroy himself for so seemingly trifling a thing as personal honor, is awe-inspiring. We ourselves can only hope for the dedication to Abalos' "bosses" to produce the same effect on him, assuming he possesses his own peculiar "Roh" on our shores to encourage him to advertise the same by demonstrating a conspicuous consumption of it.

But the sums are irrelevant. It could have been less, and being founded for peacefully stopping it might still have driven Roh to do what he did. For some people at least, if not for some citizens, nothing is too trifling that incites a good name. Or for some people at least, if not for some citizens—a concept we have set to pump in all its tragic and dazzling full glory—honor is many valuable than life.

It's the difference between living and merely existing. It's the difference between living human and being a eunuch.

There and then you see why countries like Korea and Japan which believe in those things have gone boldly where few Asian countries have gone before economically and there and then you see why countries like ours, which properly belong more to Africa than to Asia (my apologies to critics), are groveling in the mud like, well, swine (my apologies to the pigs). Quite simply, you can't eat honor and morality and high-mindedness. Or they are what allow you to eat. What are thoroughly inedible are corruption, injustice and a warped sense of right and wrong. Or they produce hunters of biblical proportion, a hunger of the soul as much as of the body.

There and then, too, you see why those countries have few lawyers but have so much law, a law so complicated, majestic and binding as though God himself commissioned it. And there and there you see why countries like ours have so many lawyers but have so little law and only the kind that is ripped, ragtag and with only Ghetto to discuss about to apply it to.

The reason is simple. The only law that's real is binding to the core that is written not in the statute books but in the hearts and minds. The one written on the statute books might just as well flutter only on top of a flagpole, which as a cardinal principle to live near to no one at all. The only real law is not the one that commands you to obey it by all the punishments it throws on you with all its might. The only real law is the one your conscience commands you to obey by all the turmoil in the soul it promises to give you if you do not.

Other countries have law—or the kind associated with restoring balance in the universe—because their people have internalized the law. Because their values and morals and codes of behavior shaped by traditions and sharpened by repetition have become so ingrained in them that they cannot think of doing things differently. We do not have law...or the kind that is associated with justice, which is to say, the good and punishing the wicked—because the law is merely an external force for us. And not even a force—it is merely an inconvenience, a suggestion (as they say about traffic lights), an entity to rob, a pidgin, a can opener to bribe. Countries, or they say, and as Singapore has demonstrated with thunderclaps, is the most implacable partner of all the rule guarantees law will be obeyed. The rest is just cat and mice, or the mice playing while the cat is away. And in the country, the cat is on permanent vacation.

My sympathies go with Roh. Sometimes there's victory in defeat. Sometimes there's life in death.

Gainers and losers

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

FIVE PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANTS were neck-ing neck and neck in the May survey of Pulse Asia, 22 months before the 2010 national elections, bunched together in a pack whose composition has not changed since four months ago. They are Vice President Noli de Castro, 18 percent; Sen. Francis Escudero, 17 percent; deposed President Joseph Estrada, 15 percent; Sen. Manuel Villar, 14 percent, and Sen. Manuel Roxas II, 12 percent.

Playing safe, Pulse Asia called these results a "statistical tie," saying that since the survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points, the five would pull about the same percentage of the votes if elections were held last May.

Given this caveat, we may safely conclude that, first, the losers are worse than the presidential aspirants who narrowed down the field of 10 contenders to only five; second, there have been significant gainers and losers in the positioning inside the pack, over the past six months; and third, the race for presidency could be affected by some political developments that could set back the chances of some of them, particularly the scandal engulfing Villar involving the U.S.$ 2-road extension project costing (though his real estate property in Las Piñas. The project is supposed to benefit Villar, who owns "The Village," supposedly a model of illegal practices, is being investigated by the Senate committee of the whole. The investigation makes Villar most vulnerable in the next months.

The May survey confirms that a wide gap has now opened between the first five and the rest of the pack. The lowest rating of the first five is that of Roxas, which, at 12 percent, is six percentage points ahead of the rating of Sen. Loren Legarda, who has the second best rating with seven percentage points.

Although Vice President Noli de Castro leads the May survey with 18 percent, he dropped from 18 percent to 16 February. The biggest gainer in the first five is Villar, who added a surprising 11 percent, a five-point jump from eight percent in February.

The gain provided a search of explanations for the spectacular change, which was surprising since Roxas has projected a bland image as semi-kind of a stimp. Maybe there has been a spectacular shift in the mood of the electorate seeking towards less charismatic politicians or a disenchantment with charismatic leaders whose performance on the job has been extremely disappointing. Villar's has been no such shift. Instead, should worry that the May survey findings are a fluke.

In the May survey, Estrada dropped to 15 percent, from 16 percent in February. Escudero, stayed at 17 percent, about a point behind May survey. Legarda has lost some points. Both Escudero and Legarda have not yet launched their campaigns. Escudero's performance (for example, at the last SNC Leadership Forum) to boost his ratings. It takes more than a presidential look and a smart-sounding slogan presented in TV three-to-inspire voters to vote for him to show them to something more substantive between his race to succeed his election as president.

Villar, who likes to believe that he is the front-runner in the race until late May, has been losing ground in the polls. He lost one point, from 13 percent in February to 14 percent in May. He should stable once his voting does not go into a free fall in the wake of the Senate investigation into his real estate transactions.

Legarda had a sharp drop of five points, from 12 percent in February to 7 percent in May. Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who has been boosted by the Dacer-Corbito murder case, has two points, from 6 percent in February to 8 percent in May.

It's clear the winnowing of the list of presidential contenders has measurably set in, and the rest of the field should now stop taking themselves seriously as presidential candidates and quietly drop their ambitions—for example, Sen. Richard Gordon, who got 1 percent in May, and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, who is keeping his aspirations alive with the merger of Lakas and Kampi as the administration's political machine in the 2010 election.

Some useful messages came from the survey. The most often cited reason for the respondent's choices was the candidate's being helpful to need others (24 percent), particularly the poor (17.3 percent) and seventh Filipino workers (8.6 percent). The least important reasons include the candidate's accomplishments (11.6) percent, not corrupt (7.1 percent), goodness (5.6 percent) and being a fighter (3.4 percent).

On the field of contenders appears to have consolidated, but it should expect the number to become fewer in coming months as developments are closely watched, with the administration-sponsored consolidation of its parties into a formidable party. This should also put pressure on the four-party opposition parties to merge and put up a united slate for president, vice president, senators, representatives as well as for provincial governors and city mayors. If the opposition cannot put up a consolidated party, it stands a good chance of being crushed by the administration's monolithic steam roller.

Should there be fewer candidates for president than in the 1992, 1998 and 2004 elections, it is likely that the next president will be elected with a bigger plurality than in 1992, when Fidel Ramos was elected with 24 percent of the votes, or in 1998, when Estrada won with nearly 40per-cent.

It has been pointed out by critics of our electoral system that since the demise of the two-party system, no president has been elected with a clear majority. The argument for a system that requires in majoritarian presidents is that popular presidents like Ramos and Estrada have had difficulties in governing their countries and with efforts to promote stability, but the election of Ramos with only 24 percent of the votes proved that a minority government can build up legitimacy and govern effectively.

A counter-argument on nuclear power

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

PUBLIC LIVING IN FEAR IN CALIFORNIA, Pangasinan and Bataan (Cojuangco says, he may be exaggerating) driving down the freeway and spotting the tell-tale towers of nuclear power plants in the horizon. "Nobody paid them any attention," he says, shaking his head in bemusement at the alarmist typical by his fellow environmentalists at the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

Critics of the BNPP—and of nuclear power in general...certainly have many issues to raise against the plant and the use of nuclear fission to generate power. Many of the arguments have been likened to "using a chain saw to cut lettuce" with critics citing risks associated with radioactive contamination, meltdowns, transport of radioactive materials and the disposal and storage of nuclear waste. But the debate is not as simple as it seems, they claim. In addition, serious issues have been raised regarding the safety of the BNPP, from its location (it hopefully on the slopes of a still-active volcano and on top of an earthquake fault), to its "international" design and therefore unfamiliarity to Filipino workers (WE).

My concern is not only cheap power, but the availability of power," says the congressman.

Filipinos, in short, have to make a choice between cheap and readily-available power and costly electricity from technology that damages the environment.

We need, of course, is cheap, available, clean and renewable energy, and I am not entirely convinced that that ideal is all that impossible to attain.

* * *

REPLY Back to Cojuangco's arguments:

The BNPP he says, has already paid the P8 billion people-so much. Aside from the billions already spent for its construction and paid to Westinghouse despite the fact that the plant was never made operational, it has also cost the country P426 billion a year in "Reregate GDP" that is, production that could have been spurred had not the power needed to fuel new factories and the like.

To opponents that the BNPP design is outdated, Cojuangco raises the example of the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant in New Jersey, which began operations in 1969 and whose license to operate expired about a month ago. "Its license was just extended for 20 more years," notes the congressman, adding that the Bataan plant is the same age and model as the BNPP have likewise undergone safety checks and were found still viable.

Despite continuing campaigns against nuclear power generation, ethical questions have not really surfaced the issue, Cojuangco says. What would be seen is Cojuangco alone (hence, whose nuclear program was the subject of a previous column), whose electricity costs are about half of those here, home 90 percent of its power needs is sourced from nuclear power, and Western studies 3 billion euros a year in electricity exports. The United States, though, still accounts for the biggest number of nuclear power plants in the world.

* * *

BENDING before the House is a bill filed by Cojuangco seeking P100 million for the "rehabilitation" of the BNPP—that is, the voucher of a study on the viability of the plant, and whether it is feasible to revive some of the components in the plant. If that study results in a positive verdict, Cojuangco says rehabilitation could possibly cost from $200 million, a fig. are arrived at by the Bataan administration, to about $4 billion.

But why insist on re-opening the BNPP with all the safety issues raised against it? In the first place, says the congressman, the Philippines can't afford to build a new plant from scratch, since most estimates put the cost of brand-new construction at $6-7 billion.

He also believes there's nothing wrong with the Bataan site, citing studies by Filipino geologists that the plant is located a safe distance away from Mt. Natib on the off-chance that the volcano would erupt, and stressing that the International Atomic Energy Agency has even given the BNPP a clean bill of health.

For now, while his bill on the BNPP is pending with the committee on appropriations, where it was forwarded after handling hearings in the committee on energy, Cojuangco says he is still in the process of raising "There's waiting for the House to take action," says Cojuangco.

* * *

RESPONSE...opposition to the very idea of re-opening the BNPP is strong. The Catholic Church, through the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, has formally voiced its objections to a particular letter, not just opposing the rehabilitation of the plant but even calling for its dismantling. "Keeping the plant would be inhumane to both and life of the people."

The Diocese of Balanga in Bataan, which encompasses the BNPP, has also installed numerous signboards all over the province to demonstrate its opposition to the plant's rehabilitation. But, says Cojuangco, "if you talk to the locals, you will find that most of them support the reopening of the plant because there are few other sources of employment in the province."

On his last term, Cojuangco says he will probably refuse to pursue Bataan's nuke bid even re-elected, "I don't will continue to advocate for the BNPP," he declares. "Even if the measure is not approved in my term, I will continue to discuss it, to raise awareness, I will continue to advocate for the issue and speaking out on the need for nuclear power."

Certainly, we won't be hearing an end to the debate anytime soon.

Why Rizal's house turned green

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

THERE IS A BRIMMING CONTROVERSY IN CALAMBA these days, and fortunately it has nothing to do with the ongoing violence in Mindanao or with floodwaters of this sleepy but traffic-prone Laguna town under up one morning to see the Rizal House painted a light shade of green. Sometimes used to the old, dirty gray color, or older folks who imagine all buildings in time to be white-washed negative. In October 2008, the house was painted blue, and some of the inner ones were forwarded to me.

CCP president Emily Abrera and photographer Ildefo Buenseso sent me one text from Peter Tony Perejohn which began, "Some idiot has painted Rizal's house green!"

Perejohn may not have been concerned by my reaction but he used the Internet.

Then acknowledgment of Rizal was brought into the fray. Reacting to the news, Abrera said that when Rizal's sister Narcisa, was appalled by the color but was objective enough to point to her witness the reason for the color change.

In many columns and lectures, I have always pointed out that Filipinos go through life seeing things but rarely noticing them. Rizal is a first example. He is everywhere on the country: on streets, local monuments pass or all public schools, museums, and equidistant all over the archipelago...but how are read his works? Do we know him at all?

Rizal's house in Calamba is not just the place of his birth and early life, it should open our eyes to the agrarian roots of social unrest in the country. While our lawmakers debate the pros and cons of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, while farmers march to Congress to push for the implementation of the law, we should remember that the ancestors of the model of Rizal's family—one that has family—was evicted not just from Calamba but from Laguna. Contrary to popular belief, the friars did not own land; they were tenants of the Dominican hacienda. They refused to pay increased rent, were re-evicted and lost.

In an imagination, we see Gaudia Civil driving these sorry like the MMDA does to squatters. Contrary to popular belief, the Rizal house was not limited and razed to the ground. They took what they could and used the materials to build a new home and life in Manila.

The eviction of the Rizal family made Rizal speak out as forcefully and directly in "El Filibusterismo."

Rizal's house in Calamba is not just a tourist spot, it is a place that should inform, educate and inspire. It should open our eyes to new ways of seeing.

Most negative reactions are understandable. "It should be painted the way Rizal saw it, the way history established it." For most people, Rizal's house should be white and to paint it another color would be like, "dressing 90-year-old woman in a tube and minidress."

Only the Bonifacios were open enough to change their look from the green color to mean that Rizal was an environmentalist.

Let's go into some history. Contrary to popular belief, the present Rizal Shrine is not the original home of the National Hero. It is not ostensibly the same legal conservation principles applied to a Rizal shrine. The present Rizal Shrine was built in the late half a century old, having been reconstructed by Juan Nakpil in the 1950s and funded by donations from schoolchildren. Nakpil based the reconstruction on a faded photograph of the house, and what was left of the original foundation found on the ruins of the site. The architect relied heavily on first-person eyewitness accounts.

Nakpil's copy is popular belief but all today no-body were white. Based on archival research, Maria Lim, formerly of the Intramuros Administration, suggests that houses had color in Spanish times, but were limited to available paint colors: blue, yellow, red and green. However, during the Spanish-American War, when the Filipinos fought the colonizers, most babay na bato were whitewashed with kalamay to bring invisible are white.

Finally, the reason for painting Rizal's house green is to highlight one of the lesser-known aspects of his character. Following the 1849 Calamba uprising customers to Filipinos for tax and census purposes, the friars who were also known by their other nickname Mercado (market) chose "Rizal" from the "Catalogo alfabetico de apellidos" (1849) because it was the Spanish word for green. Rizal chose the green to mock the Spanish "Rizal" which describes a green field ready for harvest. It was hoped that after taking "Mis to Rizal's house green?" the visitor will get a relevant answer: the green hues are meant to honor the memory of the Rizal family and their way of life.

Rizal's house is not a shrine. It is a museum.

Museums explain and inspire our exposure to artefacts to find a given the color of polio or ripa-ses stuff, the NHI historical preservation division didn't take the initiative to have paint mixed specially for the Rizal Shrine and depended on the affordable, commercially available green paint. Several others, it is hoped that the educational purpose of the house is not lost in the controversy over the new coat of paint for outmoded personal preferences.

Comments are welcome at ocampoambeth@mac.com

Decontrol shattered RP's future

LETTERS

IN HIS MAY 12 COLUMN, JOSÉ L. MERCADO said: "The region's (Asia's) economic precedent in the 1960s...the Philippines (sub-Sahara) in the in just 20 years, Malaysia and Thailand virtually scrubbed absolute poverty. China had a higher poverty incidence than the Philippines. Now Beijing's poverty incidence is only half that of Manila."

It was in the 1950s—definitely not in the 1960s—when the Philippines was razed by the World Bank as now only to Japan in Asia's race for development. The industrial advisors made by the Philippines in the 1950s, triggered by the import substitution strategy of development and under the protection of import and exchange controls, were in fact rolled back in the 1960s as a result of decontrol and devaluation prescribed by Washington through the World Bank-International Monetary Fund (WB-IMF).

This was what happened. In the 1950s, the Second Bell Mission to the Philippines recommended the adoption of import and exchange controls to curb the massive hemorrhage of US dollars from the Philippines. But Miguel Cuaderno and Antonio Luis of the Central Bank converted import and exchange controls into an import substitution strategy of development, under which more than 1,200 factories emerged. By 1958, President Carlos Garcia predefined a "Filipino First Policy" and the country was poised to focus on heavy industries—apparently to the consent of Chairman M. Bello's call for "nationalist industrialization"—with the launching of the Iligan integrated steel mills and FPAL.

But Diosdado Macapagal, with US support, became president in 1962 and, in exchange for US items of almost $500 million, torpedoed import and exchange controls. In their place, he instituted decontrol and devaluation or, in short, free trade. Decontrol opened Philippine-made products to the competition of tax-exempt imported goods, while devaluation killed the peso costs of imported machinery, spare parts and raw materials. Only a few of the import substitution factories survived the massacre; even the survivors were marginalized.

Thus began the WB-IMF control over the commanding heights of the Philippine economy, under which all Philippine presidents (without exception from Macapagal to his daughter, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo) have been mere caretakers (factotum) of the WB-IMF. Their prime duty has been and still is to enforce WB-IMF debt conditions, not the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.

No question about it, during the 1950s the Philippines was ahead of Malaysia and Thailand in Asia's development race. But today Malaysia and Thailand are newly industrialized countries (NICs), while the Philippines is a failed economy, dependent upon foreign countries for the employment of its citizens. China and the Philippines are simply not in the same league. The Philippines is a Third World country; China not only belongs to the First World but it is now the third largest economy in the world, pushing Germany—the largest economy in Europe—to fourth place.

—ERASMO GAT DIZON, Tahanan, Quezon City

Cigarette butt caused Gordon's ouster

FORMER PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada made himself the butt of jokes via his "Erapisms" to project himself into Malacañang. His presidency was a big joke. He ousted from his post and his eventual pardon, courtesy of President Macapagal-Arroyo, were jokes of the highest order. Former Pres. Fidel Ramos' reluctance to the challenge of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority in 1998 was a big joke too. Imagine replacing Richard Gordon with his and Subic's foe, Lamberto Torres, who is a crusader and a vengeful act that almost ousted the guts of some 8,000 Filipino volunteers who toiled to make the Subic miracle happen.

In his letter, Ramos said Gordon did not violate the law, nor Erapi's ejaculate, that ousted Gordon from SBMA. (Inquirer, 5/26/09) No one is denying that, but to say that it wasn't Erapi's cigarette butt—which he threw on the rug of then Mayor Gordon's office in Olongapo City held in the presidential limousine, including the late Luis Beltran—which Gordon picked up to Erapi's consternation, is an outrageous joke.

The incident brought an end to Erapi and Dick's friendship. I would do a Bill Clinton in saying to Pacoma, "It's the cigarette butt, stupid!" Everyone knows that when Gordon assumed office, his first order of the day was to issue an executive order ending Gordon's re-appointment as SBMA chairman by former President Fidel Ramos. How personal can someone be? The dolor's take that cigarette butt incident was personally, would an exemplary order ending Gordon from SBMA be an act most worthy for a president of millions of Filipinos?

The Supreme Court long ago settled the matter and Gordon has all the right in the world to claim that it was that incident that ejected his ouster. It was his personal opinion as told to ABC in the presidential debate. It was Erapi's personal motivation to get back at Gordon.

It's a good thing that Deyonne saw beyond the shenanigans of SBMA's history and, by dint of luck for his economic masters, that of Batasan too, he has hunger to get that one spotlight again, this lackluster politician, wants to ride on Gordon's increasing popularity as a well-meaning public servant. Just accepted the Supreme Court's decision as all law-abiding Filipinos must do. We now bestir a high position in government. Let's have it, he is making a difference in that infrastructure and sometimes theatrical body.

This just goes to prove that you can't put a good man down. There is always an open window for guys who have integrity and reputability to make a change or effect change in our nation. As for Deyonne, all he needs is a further desire to step him off completely from the political landscape that he desperately wants to invade.

—MIKE PUDOL, mikepudol@hotmail.com.ph

The conspiracy against two nationalist heroes

NATIONAL HISTORICAL COMMISSION CHAIR Ambeth Ocampo made a curious error when he wrote in his May 11 column ("The execution of Bonifacio") that Gen. Artemio Ricarte had signed for the Bonifacio brothers' execution when Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo considered exile.

Historians Teodoro A. Agoncillo, in his book "History of the Filipino People," and Milagros E. Guerrero, in her biography of Emilio Aguinaldo, never mentioned Ricarte as arguing for the execution of Andres Bonifacio and his brother, Procopio. The two historians agreed that Gen. Mariano Noriel and (Sr.-Ed.) Pilar, seconded by Clemente Jose Zabala, Dr. Anastacio Francisco and Gen. Mariano Natividad, were the ones who made an effort to convince Aguinaldo to withdraw his banishment order, with Aguinaldo adding that the Zabala, Francisco and Natividad "feared Bonifacio."

Ricarte was Bonifacio's trusted friend and "right hand man." Ricarte was also one of the 41 men who signed the "Sakdalista Agreement" that pledged to set up an army separate from that of Aguinaldo, and which was used by Aguinaldo to have the Bonifacios convicted of treason.

But that is not the main reason for this letter. In commemorating the death of the Katipunan founder on May 10, 1897, Ocampo conserved set "eyewitness account" by Lazaro Makapagal, who commanded the four-man team that executed the Bonifacios in Maragondon, Cavite. The account, published by the Free Press in 1928, notes that 20 years after the event, stated that Andres begged for his life, telling Makapagal, "Pamanhik sinoy ako kapatid" (Despite the brothers). "It was him," according to Ocampo, Makapagal wrote that Andres also "begged for (a) life on his knees."

Makapagal, being the only survivor among the five executioners of Andres, was the only "eyewitness" who could give an account of how the brothers died. Makapagal, however, never met he believed. He claimed that Andres died begging for his life. But if Bonifacio really begged on his knees, why didn't Makapagal mention this in his first account, which was already quite detailed?

Bonifacio lived a life of indefatigable courage. He joined the La Liga Filipina led by Jose Rizal, organized the Katipunan after Rizal's exile, and secretly nourished and expanded the Katipunan for four years, freely risking not only his own necessities but also his comrades' lives. He led the Philippine Revolution's first attack against Spain. Up to the very end, he stuck to his principle of unyielding opposition to Spanish rule.

There is a continuing conspiracy to malign our "two greatest nationalist heroes, Jose Rizal and Andres Bonifacio. To defame Rizal, the conspirators try to make it appear that he renounced his writings against the Church and the Spanish regime; they even forged a retraction supposedly signed by him. As for Bonifacio, they try to make him look like a common outlaw, like the way he lived his entire life as he gave against it.

—MANUEL E. SUMMERS, Spokesman, Movement for Truth, in History (Mat-T-HOTH), mthinhistory@yahoo.com

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Across the NATION

MANILA EDITOR Antonio Tuy Bergonia

Another US firm lays off 293 workers

Mayor tells kidnappers to free woman

CUYAPO CITY—MAYOR Madilah Sema on Tuesday warned kidnappers of a Chinese Filipino woman to release her immediately or face the consequences of their act.

Sema said he would use a "tooth-for-a-tooth" policy to arrest the release of Lourdes Han, a 72-year-old caretaker and resident of the private subdivision of Sunrise Hills—owned by Mr. Han, a sister of former Governor Hermel Ito, was the second kidnap victim in the city and the third in the region since April.

She was seized by the armed men on Sunday night while she was on her way home with her driver, identified as Bernardo Isidro.

Isidro refused to leave the woman as both of them are now being held captives, Sema said.

Speaking over a local radio station, Sema told members of the Pentagon gang that they would use all the resources to put its members behind bars.

"Set her free," Sema said. "You know how you would feel if somebody kidnapped your loved ones."

Senior Supt. Willie Dangupon, city police director, said Isidro brushed Han from the sedan's arms after her car broke down. They took a jeepney and headed for home, he said.

Two gunmen first robbed the jeepney passengers of their personal belongings, including Binh's cash collection from the weight area.

Dangupon said the robbers ordered the driver to proceed to Datu Odin Sinsuat town where Han and Isidro were transferred to two motorcycles.

Ransom Money

In April, the Pentagon seized Wilson Yu and his daughter, and later freed them after receiving an undisclosed amount of ransom money. Yu is also a relative of Han's brother.

Last week, the gang seized a Taiwanese, Hsiao-Chen Hsu, in Kabacan, North Cotabato. She was freed after her relatives purportedly paid an undisclosed ransom money.

The Army's 6th Infantry Division has blamed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) for the three kidnapping cases.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Boroc, 6th ID spokesperson, said the MILF was using funds because its resources were being deployed by months of fighting government forces in Maguindanao.

Eid Kabalu, MILF civil-military spokesperson, denied the military allegation. "We have nothing to do with all of these because that is un-Islamic and we are still negotiating peace with the government," he said.

Kabalu said that while talks were indeed shrinking the area seized Mayo Isidro was behind the kidnapping, the MILF is a revolutionary organization, one not in any way involved. Abdurahim Bermudo, Inquirer Mindanao

PUPILS of the Bacolod Elementary School in Bacolod were in Lanao del Norte carry chairs to their classroom during Monday's opening of public schools.

Schools exec gets 90-day suspension for grave offenses

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—REGIONAL DIRECTORY Josil Lapuz has placed Silay Schools Division superintendent Fernando D. Jacalne a 90-day preventive suspension without pay for grave offenses.

Lapuz said he was acting on a complaint indicting Jo for various administrative offenses.

Fe has been charged with accepting money indirectly from a teacher-applicant and solicitation of sexual favors from male teacher applicants, among others.

When reached by the reporter through his cell phone, Jo refused to comment. "Because to [memorandum] is in the process."

Mildred Gatin, acting director of the Department of Education (DepEd) in Western Visayas, explained on Monday that Lapuz ordered the suspension of Jo after the agency's head office sent a fact-finding team to look into the complaints.

Lapuz explained that the DepEd found a prima facie case after a thorough and exhaustive examination of the complaint, as well as the verified affidavits and oral testimonies of several witnesses.

The charges included:

- Grave misconduct for soliciting or accepting directly or indirectly anything of monetary value in the course of his official duties where he received money indirectly from a teacher applicant.
- Grave misconduct, grossly immoral conduct and sexual harassment for seeking sexual favors from male teacher applicants.
- Simple neglect of duty for non-attendance in school board meetings.
- Grave misconduct and grave dishonesty in the course of official duties due to his repeated public reprimand and humiliation of teachers.
- Grave misconduct, violations of existing Civil Service Law and regulations for his unexplained promotion of undeserving teachers.
- Grave misconduct and unfair discrimination in rendering public service for the unfair treatment and unjust determination of litigious acts, a member of the Bukidnon tribe whose rights and preferences are recognized and given priority under Republic Act No. 8371 or the Indigenous People's Rights Act of 1997.
- Pretext of private business, vocation or profession without permission as required by civil service rules and regulations for selling merchandise at his office.

Lapuz ordered Fe to submit his reply within five days from receipt of the order.

If the reply would not be considered satisfactory, he would be required to cause if he wanted to undergo a formal investigation, Lapuz said.

Lapuz said that Lapuz appointed Bernabel Balocdo, Division superintendent Milagros Gonzales as Silay Schools Division officer-in-charge in a concurrent capacity.

Silay Mayor Jose Montelibano on Monday said many complaints had been raised against Jo and that it was about time the DepEd acted on the matter.

DOJ files charges vs ex-Batangas vice gov, 6 others

BATANGAS CITY—THREE YEARS AFTER the failed attempt on the life of former Gov. Armando Sanchez and the death of two of his aides, the Department of Justice has filed charges against his former vice governor, Richard "Dodoy" Recto, for allegedly masterminding the bomb attack.

Charges of complex crime of murder with frustrated murder were filed at the Office of the Clerk of Court at the Regional Trial Court in Batangas against Recto, lawyer Christopher Belmonte, Christina Antonio, Bettina Balderama, Lt. Lt. Argobert Guy, Lt. Grade Rimen Sudora, and several John Does.

Acting City Prosecutor Fidel Blanzuying filed Criminal Case No. 36607 at around 2 p.m. Tuesday.

Two bomb explosions ripped through Sanchez's Hummer H2 sports utility vehicle shortly after it left the provincial capitol on the evening of June 7, 2006.

Sanchez was able to jump out before the second blast that killed his driver, Lucito Ison, and security aide, PO2 Eric Lacdobo.

The former governor, who appeared to be the target, suffered burns and injuries and was rushed to Jesus of Nazareth Hospital.

In a press statement released by his counsel, Rachelle Tipacki, Sanchez congratulated the DOJ, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation for successfully concluding the investigation on the bombing.

Marvyn Lydia Lesaba, Inquirer Southern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—ANother American-led firm in this city announced that it would lay off 293 employees, on the same day the foreign chambers forecast that the Philippine export industry will rebound only in 2011.

Moog Controls Philippines, a 23-year-old firm that manufacturers airline components, advised the Department of Labor and Employment that it would "restructure and reduce employment by 293 of its ... personnel ... effective July 15."

Texas Instruments Philippines Inc. (TIPI), which leased here, was the first American firm in the country to unionize workers at the end of 2006.

Ana Dizon, DOLE Cordillera director, said Moog believed it would save a rebound in chartpiece. Moog is building a new manufacturing plant in Isel jointly managed by the Baguio Convention and Development Authority and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

Dizon said the "retrenchment/reduction in manning of employees has been put on hold."

Severance pay

She said Moog notified in the first part of the year by progressing work hour reduction to cope with the US recession.

Up to its closure, 1 insurance, Moog said its retrenchment program—the first it conducted since it opened shop in the Baguio City Economic Zone—was "indicative of the gravity of the effect of the worldwide recession."

Terminated employees will receive severance pay and specific benefits well in excess of legislated requirements. Pesa, DOLE and its attached agencies have also been mobilized to make available the government assistance package for displaced workers during the global economic crisis and to support the company's replacement efforts," Moog said.

Dizon said Moog had granted the 1,611 all workers two months pay for every year of service, and assured them that their employment benefits would continue until the yearend.

The DOLE has scheduled three orientation/information sessions on June 2-4, hoping to persuade those retrenched to go into business or alternative employment here or abroad.

The outlook is not too gloomy, based on how TIPI has been participating in job fairs lately, Dizon said.

TIPI has been looking for 3,000 employees for its new assembly and test facility at the Clark Special Economic Zone.

Eleanor Cabreros, Inquirer Northern Luzon

5,000 rally against nickel project in Mindoro

SAN JOSE, OCCIDENTAL MINdoro—More than 5,000 people opposing the proposed Minoro nickel project of Intex Resources Philippines Inc. holds rally during a public hearing at the municipal hall of Mamburao on Wednesday.

Compared to the session during the May 14 public hearing on the issue in Pola, town in Oriental Mindoro, Intex spokesperson Ben delos Reyes described the Mamburao protest as "peaceful and orderly."

"The orderly public hearing was largely due to the desire of the people to foster a civilized discussion of the issue. Governor [Josephine] Sato [Mamburao] is our client, so I don't know her stand," Delos Reyes said.

A resolution passed by the provincial board and signed by Sato-Romualdez "expressing its objection to the public consultation regarding the Minoro nickel project" was disregarded by the hearing.

Vice Gov. Mario Bravo Mendoza said the officials would work on the passage of a 25-year mining moratorium in Occidental Mindoro.

"We will go to villages and will be the one to conduct the public hearing to get the real sentiments of the people," he said.

In a text message to the reporter, Sato-Romualdez said, "I strongly support the 25-year moratorium on large-scale mining in Occidental Mindoro."

In 2005, a board resolution manifested "vehement objection to any large-scale mining operations that may be proposed on the Occidental Mindoro."

It "listed the harmful effects of any large-scale mining activity that may cause irreparable damage on the natural resources including the endangered species of the tamaraw, the natural habitat of the Mangyan, and the production of palay and other crops in the province."

Ship Rebel Tan' Villanueva, director of the Social Services Commission of the Apostolic Mission of San Jose, said the rally was conducive against him coming.

But Mamburao Mayor Buenet Ilil Jacata said it was but proper to conduct the hearing in his town where the provincial capitol is located.

At the public consultation, the president of the Association of Barangay Captains in San Jose town said the local officials over its issuing mining because they believed the taxes of the company would improve their lives and provide jobs.

But Villanueva said on their and how rest on goodness benefits never last down by times.

The Pola hearing was marred by a brief confrontation between a mayor and a priest as continuing activities insisted on going inside the venue where protesting adverse were already seated.

The more than 2,000 protesters were led by the multisectoral Alyansa Laban sa Mina (Alliance Against Mining), according to the police.

Tension was at its height at about 10:30 a.m., half an hour past the scheduled hearing, after Pola Mayor Nina Asenas insisted to the dumpsites of the hearing by the protesters.

The hearing was later called off. Another scheduled for May 31 in Riverain town was similarly cancelled. Mindoro E. Mirada, Inquirer Southern Luzon

WATER BOY Climbing up the hill and wearing his other outlook portable water at Barangay Cabanuan, Laguna, Canuelan Bar is a daily chore for this boy. [illegible]

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Donors help keep school for blind afloat

By Maurice Malanes
Baguio City

TWO YEARS AGO, A US NAVY retiree was looking for the Tabauang Walang (flagdotum, a house for persons with physical disabilities, in Baguio City so he could offer his help, but the driver of the cab he took brought him instead to the school of the Northern Luzon Association of the Blind (NLAB).

The man did not turn his back, however. After assessing the needs of the blind children, the retiree, who preferred not to be named, volunteered to supply the school with four sacks of rice monthly and to provide dinner every Monday for the 39 children under its care.

He has been doing this since and has pledged to continue helping when the school year opens this month.

For Dona Rosario, NLAB president and executive director, the said driver's monumental serendipity, "who knows the retiree was led by the Holy Spirit?" she says.

Quiet benefactors

An Indian couple has been doing the same thing, providing snacks or lunch once a week for the children.

This brand of quiet benefactors has kept afloat northern Luzon's only school for the blind, especially at a time when its revenue chanoe had reduced their funding, says Rosario.

The school offers free elementary education to visually impaired children in town and central Luzon and continues to encourage parents to enroll their blind children there.

Graduates cross into regular high schools and later pursue university or college education, or technical or vocational courses, such as health massage.

Economic crisis

The NLAB's future, Rosario says, is at stake because its donors are also affected by the global economic crisis. The school is supported by the Christoffel Blinden Mission (CBM), a church-based German donor; Helen Keller Foundations; the Diocese of Baguio-Benguet; and other local civic, educational and religious groups and individuals.

Last year, the CBM provided nearly half of the needs of the pupils. This school year, it pledged only 33 percent, saying the current economic crunch allowed its supporters among the low-income European parishioners, says Rosario.

The NLAB spends P6,500 for each child annually or P253,500 for the 39 pupils enrolled last school year. With the reduced funding, it has to initiate fund drives to sustain its mission.

Rosario is hoping that more people will follow the examples set by the blary retiree and the Indian couple. "Many people in both government and the private sector have yet to appreciate that if these visually impaired are educated they can become productive [members of society]," she says.

She cites blind couple Rolando and Sharita Bisaga, who teach audiotape subjects, including music, at the NLAB school, both are graduates of the school.

BLIND students of the Northern Luzon Association of the Blind (NLAB) show their talents to their parents and teachers during the this year's graduation ceremonies.

Other graduates have established their own massage clinics, helping reduce the number of beggars in the city, says Rosario.

The NLAB faces another difficulty this school year. Its home on the hill along the Marcos Highway where its two-story school has stood since 1983, will expire this month, forcing the school to relocate to a smaller house on Bokawkan Road.

Repair work of the generously donated house is not Rosario's only concern. She also has to face complaints of neighbors who claim that the front fence installed by the NLAB workers was illegal because it was not covered by a building permit.

The irony of it, says Rosario, is that the complainants are encroaching on parts of the NLAB property.

Rosario did her homework. Citing a historical document showing the original lines, she explained to city authorities that the NLAB was just involved in restoration work.

THE NLAB school on Bokawkan Road in Baguio City helps blind children become productive members of society.

At times, Rosario feels like giving up. A former nun who refused to get paid for her services, she says her difficulties and misunderstandings are her cue, giving her hyperventilate.

"I cannot just abandon these children," she says. "They are my inspiration."

'If these visually impaired are educated, they can become productive members of society'

Arnel's latest journey: Peacemaking

By Tonette Orejas
Clark Freeport

ARNEL PINEDA HAS TAKEN on a far bigger role on top of being the lead vocalist of the American rock band Journey. The singer-songwriter's latest passion: Peacemaking.

"I introduced myself as one of their biggest supporters in bringing about peace," said Pineda, the United Nations' newest ambassador of peace, referring to his encounter with "habitat dwellers" or indigenous people who fled the war in Mindanao and forced to live in an evacuation center in Sasmuan.

"I'm amazed that they were able to survive the hostilities. We shouldn't expect that peace is easy to come by to Mindanao or to other parts of the Philippines. Alongside this, land and livelihood should be provided as well as education and the basic necessities. I'll do my bit in helping end the violence there," he said in a recent visit to the Clark Freeport.

Pineda has been sharing the message of unity in this new journey.

"No one is big or small. We are all significant. Let's join hands to see can attain peace and progress," he said.

Sibling or the peace cause is Pineda's way of "being Filipino" as he delves in the international music scene.

"Mapagmahal or maharing Filipino (Affectionate and a good Filipino)" sina kina Charito Planas, executive director of The Stepping Filipinos, introduced Pineda to the Aeta people who gathered during the launch of the Aeta Village at the park's extension in Clark.

JOURNEY frontman Arnel Pineda's latest mission is to preach peace to the Aeta community.

Pineda has been sharing the message of unity in this new journey

Hard times

Born to Kapampangan parents in Sampaloc, Manila, Pineda traveled on the streets at a young age after his mother's death and the family was mired in debt. He sold scrap lumber and utensils, and later cleaned ships docked at a pier in Manila.

In those hard times, he kept his optimism high until he found his break in local nightclubs.

"I'm proud to be a Filipino and I encourage you to be proud of our being Filipino," Pineda, 41, told the young Aeta people from Barangay Sapang Bato in Angeles City.

For Pineda and other guests, members of the tribe performed the dance (prayer hymns to Apo Namalyari, the deity of Mount Pinatubo), munching (war dance) and sayaw (offering).

Pineda lit the bonfire that signaled the community dancing. He sang two songs for them as gratitude, wishing he could learn their tribal music soon.

"I'm very grateful to them, kung hindi sa kanila, hindi mapapansin ang kalawang Filipino (It's not for them, our culture would not be richly," he said.

Aside from living traditions, the village features Aeta survival skills in hunting, mountain living and fire making.

The people not only built four houses there as funds provided by the provincial government. They also planted vegetables in every available space.

The Aeta Village occupies a coal lava area next to the 3.9-hectare park that showcases prehistoric and volcanic areas in the country's history. Its exhibition completes the geo-cultural attraction.

It also features replicas of the Bogus cave system, Kalinga houses and Mariano Tongpo's homes.

No-hide-outs, please

Wyda Cruise, the first Aeta law graduate, said people helping the tribe survive should avoid giving dole-outs. "The help we need are the kind that will enable us to stand on our own feet," Cruise said. "Farming assistance is one of them."

Catalina Pinsiumcan, who, at 68, still tills the land, said Aeta culture is tied to the people's farming activities.

"Pinatubo's eruption [in 1991] destroyed our forests and the rivers but we returned to our villages to farm again so much our grandchildren to love our land and our culture," Pinsiumcan said.

House rams through Con-ass resolution

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ship could override any Senate objections to proposed amendments.

"This means that under 1108, we are opening the entire Constitution to amendments ... That is where Malacañang's agenda in keep President Arroyo in power will come in," Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teodoro Casiño told the committee before the House leadership pushed through with the vote.

"This will allow any politicians to keep themselves in power," Casiño added.

He said that with the majority's insistence on such an "unconstitutional move, we are putting our democracy in danger."

He said the members of the majority voted for HB 1109 on pain of losing their pork barrel.

Another opposition lawmaker, Carlos Padilla, said the convicted vote showed the "tyranny of the majority."

"This is a massive deception of the Filipino people," Isafi Basto party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano said. Akbayan lawmaker Walden Bello said the vote was in effect an extension of the Arroyo's term beyond 2010.

"Through the retirement's nail touching," Gabriela party-list Rep. Luzviminda Ilagan declared on the floor.

The House plenary will have to decide on whether to convene the Con-ass, to well in the next steps to be taken, according to La Unidad Rep. Victor Ortega, chair of the committee on constitutional amendments.

To speed up passage of the resolution, the House leadership earlier limited to 5 minutes the speeches of lawmakers opposing the voting.

At 9:30 p.m., Sharif Kabuntalan Rep. Didagen Dilangalen suddenly moved to close the debate after only five of the 23 congressmen lined up—Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona, Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza and Hacienda Rep. Pedro Golez—were able to speak out against HB 1109.

Dilangalen claimed that the arguments raised against HB 1109 were already "redundant."

At 9:53 p.m., the majority used to shut down the debate and, after a 20-minute break, the minority resumed their opposition against what they called the majority's "railroading" of the Con-ass.

Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Carlos Padilla said the road map to Arroyo's HB 1109 had made "this Congress the worst in the annals of history."

After an early afternoon caucus, the majority decided to tackle HB 1109 ahead of the other consensus measures pending on the floor, such as the bills on the right to reply and on the extension of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

Speaker Prospero Nograles then announced that the Tuesday plenary session would be about HB 1109. As of 4:30 p.m., 211 lawmakers were present.

Critics have also warned that HB 1109 is a veiled attempt to stop the May 2010 elections and lift term limits on elected officials, including Ms Arroyo.

The original author of the measure, Cotabato 3rd Rep. Jesli Lucman, later withdrew his support for it. He said he opposed the resolution to be challenged in the Supreme Court.

Three pending HB 1109 have said that they merely wanted to force the Supreme Court to rule on whether Charter change requires the vote of three-fourths of all members of Congress, or three-fourths of the House and three-fourths of the Senate.

GMA's tacit approval

The President herself gave tacit approval for Lakas-Kampi-CMD rallies in the House panel for the passage of HB 1109, according to Nograles.

He said the decision to push for HB 1109 over his own HB 7317—which seeks to lift constitutional limits on foreign investments through regular legislation, or Republic Act-type Charter change—was reached during the official merger on Thursday of the ruling parties Lakas-CMD and Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi).

"The leaders of Lakas and Kampi decided in that meeting that this is one of the things that we will push for. I will not deny that the [the President] was present when we decided on that, but she did not say anything," Nograles said in an interview.

HB 1109 was apparently presented for signatures in the House by the President's allies, Pampanga Rep. Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Although Villafuerte, the president of Kampi, decided to drop the resolution, Ms Arroyo's allies in the House committee on constitutional amendments voted to have it debated on the floor ahead of HB 7317, which has been pending for more than a month.

Nograles said HB 1109 was easier to pass in the House because it only required a simple majority vote (1/3rd) compared to its own resolution, which proposed a specific amendment and, therefore, needed three-fourths of the vote (2/3rd).

The latter is more difficult to muster.

"If I do not get three-fourths for 737 after nominal voting, the resolution is lost. It will never see the light of day, it will be buried. So we will not have a vote on 737 if we are not sure we can get three-fourths of the House," Nograles said.

He added that his resolution would be tackled after HB 1109.

Congress is to adjourn on June 5.

'That's nothing'

Informed late yesterday of the House plenary discussions on HB 1109, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile responded with a shrug.

"Wala' nun' (That's nothing). How can they do it?" he told reporters.

Enrile reiterated the senators' position that the House move is around the Constitution with-out Senate participation was "no solution in reality."

"They need the Senate," he said. "It's impossible for them to accomplish this. Aiyong ninyo nang pag-ehalitan yan (Don't bother with it)."

Said Sen. Francis Escudero: "It is only the President now who can stop the Cha-cha train in the House house. She is, after all, the head of the newly merged Lakas-Kampi-CMD."

But in a report, Reuters quoted Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno as saying: "Nobody believes there will be a constitutive assembly in Congress. Nobody, not even the sponsors of the resolution."

Gabriel Claudio, Ms Arroyo's political adviser, said he doubted that the House plenary debate on HB 1109 would affect the "certainty and inevitability" of the May 2010 elections.

"I think the leaders of the House and the proponents of Charter change are just being consistent. They have said that to list in the proposal for Con-ass is concerned, they are just after a trigger mechanism for a case to be filed before the Supreme Court so there could be a final interpretation on the manner of voting by Congress in a constituent assembly," Claudio said in a briefing.

"[The lawmakers] are very consistent about their observation that there is really no more time for actual changes to the Constitution to take place before the elections. So nobody is disputing the certainty of the elections in 2010," Claudio said.

He added: "This is all the more bolstered by the unrivaled merger of the two administration parties."

'Easy' resolution

Nograles told reporters that HB 1109 was put on the table first because the fight of reply and CARP extension bills had been discussed extensively.

HB 1109 needs only a majority vote of the House members to be approved because it does not propose any specific amendment to the Constitution.

"It's a resolution that's easy to get the majority [to vote for], as long as they've all present. We won't have a hard time getting that," Nograles said.

"It's not that we want to put it first. Let's get it a start ... It's very simple. It's just a resolution. It only needs a majority vote. It does not need three-fourths," he said.

Asked if the constituent assembly would be convened after the approval of HB 1109, Nograles said he did not think so.

"Maybe after successes back [in the resumption of the session]. Maybe after the Sona (State of the Nation Address)," he said.

If HB 1109 is approved, Nograles will call for a leadership meeting to discuss the next steps.

"It would have to be implemented. Here, I don't know," he said.

Interior Secretary Puno and the Philippines would "completely lose its credibility" before the international community if it flipflopped on its assurance on the holding of elections next year.

At a forum organized by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap), Puno said his decision to work the ruling coalition's nomination as its vice presidential candidate was proof that the polls would push through as scheduled.

According to Focap, according the Constitution before the 2010 elections was one virtual impossible. BOB reports from JJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño

FVR, Estrada meet this week

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ecording to an aide.

Estrada is among the Filipinos' top three choices for president, based on a survey conducted in May by the pollwatch Pulse Asia.

"Imagine, your former enemy and [your] ally teaming up against you," Muhay said, alluding to an Estrada-Ramos alliance against President Macapagal-Arroyo. "This will confuse the [administration] party's members."

"President Ramos still has loyal allies in Lakas who will follow him," Muhay added.

Palace hits Villar

At a Ramos-Estrada meeting loomed, Muhay said, Malacañang's highly-placed political adviser Gabriel Claudio said in a Palace press briefing.

Earlier, Muntinlupa said it had invited not the differences with Ramos, who had deplored the supposedly hasty merger of his Lakas-CMD (Christian Muslim Democrats) and Mr Arroyo's Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino party.

Muhay said a Ramos-Estrada reunion could leave Lakas-Kampi on shaky ground.

A number of Lakas-Kampi members have indicated dissatisfaction over the merger and apparently are looking for other parties to back on to.

Back to the LP fold

Quezon Rep. Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III reported that 10 former members of the Liberal Party from Lakas-Kampi had sent feelers about wanting to return to their old party.

The LP spokesperson said the potential LP returnees could be accommodated between 7 and 11 Lakas-Kampi members discussed by the latter with which the country's two biggest political parties were unified.

Exploratory talks are being held with three Lakas-Kampi members and the leadership of the LP, Tañada said.

"They feel that local conflicts in the local areas are still not be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties," he said.

Mandaluyong Rep. Neil Tiaron (LP) said the fallout from the administration parties' merger was expected because not all of the members endorsed it.

Attractive option

"The transfer to other parties is also expected and the LP is an attractive option," Tiaron said, adding that the new entrants should always remain conditions before they would be admitted.

Although the leaders of Lakas and Kampi have agreed to merge at the presidency of Mr Arroyo, they are believed to be still divided on the merger over differing party conflicts at the local level, the main problem that had delayed the merger for years.

Speaker Prospero Nograles and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, leaders of Lakas and Kampi, respectively, have declared that the "equity of the memberships"—the principle that bars sitting officials in the cabinet for party endorsements—would be observed in the 2010 polls.

But some Lakas and Kampi members are skeptical about whether this policy would be enforced in the future.

One reason cited for the debacle of the administration's nominated candidates suffered in 2007 was the infighting between Lakas and Kampi members in the provinces, cities and towns.

Defections loom

The looming defections supposedly are part of "poaching" activities by some presidential aspirants to boost their own political bases.

The LP's standard bearer, Sen. Mar Roxas, has surged in several surveys, tightening the 2010 race. This has made it imperative for the party to strengthen its national network.

Lakas-Kampi's former presidents, Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, on the other hand, is seeking a new home with the Nacionalista People's Coalition (NPC).

Another supposedly "hotter" recruitee is Villar's NP. A pro-Villar source disclosed several Lakas-Kampi members, including congressmen, governors and mayors—were finalizing plans to transfer to the NP.

At the Palace, Claudio told reporters that a "presidential nominee" had been trying to woo Lakas-Kampi-CMD members, specifically municipal mayors, to his side but this had so far been "foiled."

"I won't name him, but I think he should attend to his problems in the Senate because he's being hit there left and right. He should spend more time in the Senate than in the field trying to prime legitimate members of the party," Claudio said.

FVR's influence

While Claudio did not specifically mention Villar, he left little doubt who he had in mind.

Villar is having trouble with colleagues in the Senate allegedly causing a double insertion in the national budget for a major road project that benefited his real estate companies. Villar has denied the accusations.

Claudio made his allegation when asked about a report that congressmen were inducing Lakas-Kampi to join the LP ranks.

He said he wasn't aware of any breakaway at the moment but if so, but the party would "cross-check" the report.

"Everybody is staying in place. The mood of party members is very upbeat," he said.

Claudio also said most of the presidential "aspirants" had met or sent emissaries to meet with Ramos to seek his support or advice.

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Gibo rating disappoints Malacañang

Front page A1

standard-bearer of the administration's Lakas-Kampi-CMD party.

Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II is not running ahead his ratings, with a mere 5-percentage points to 13 percent.

His rating put him in a statistical tie with Vice President Noli de Castro (18 percent), Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero (17 percent) and former President Joseph Estrada (14 percent).

The nationwide survey conducted on May 6-11, had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95-percent confidence level.

Kwina factor

Roxas acknowledged that his friends, broadcaster Korina Sanchez, was a factor in the boost he got from the survey. He said people knew about his romance with Sanchez, whom he is set to marry this year.

"I reckon that people see what was in my heart and they rewarded me with their trust," the 51-year-old senator said.

Roxas also said he would visit the relatives of Sanchez on Saturday to finally ask for her hand in marriage.

The people announced down the line, including Nograles, that the survey was conducted about a year before the May 2010 elections and the cabinet official "has all the time and opportunity to catch up."

"Secretary Teodoro has every reason, every opportunity to improve his ratings, to make his position, capabilities, qualifications and stature of governance better known to the public as we have certain positive influences in forthcoming surveys," he said.

Claudio said he had spoken with a number of people who had "high position" in Teodoro's camp, including presidential aspirant's appearance in a recent leadership forum at the Ateneo de Manila University.

"A lot of people were impressed by his performance there," he said. "I think in his case, it's just a matter of being able to project himself and express himself a little more to the public."

Selection process

But Claudio made it clear that the new Lakas-Kampi-CMD party was not necessarily endorsing Teodoro's bid to become the administration's standard bearer pending the start of the official selection process.

He said Benny Antiporda, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chairman, had "an much time and opportunity to be able to expose himself in a better light, in a better way to the public."

Despite an aggressive effort to make himself known nationwide, Teodoro registered a miserable 0.2 percent in the Pulse Asia survey.

"We have been very supportive of his efforts, not only as a Cabinet member, but as a presidential aspirant," Claudio said of Teodoro.

"We do wish that people will give him a better chance in terms of trying to get to know him better and perhaps themselves better arguments why the accomplishments that he has made in his current position," the political adviser said.

Teodoro's and Roxas's ratings aside, Claudio said the administration was "elated" that the Cabinet got a high survey rating.

"We would like to think that this is in recognition of the good work that he is doing in the President's Cabinet," he said.

"The Vice President is certainly able to project very well the caring and the spirit and the efforts that he is exerting in addressing the concerns and the plights of the poor segment of our population," Claudio said.

NEWS

Hayden Kho volunteers to speak out against drugs

By Edwin C. Tamayo Jr.

IF CONFIDENCE IS THE BEST medicine then Dr. Hayden Kho would make the ideal "advocate" against drug abuse, basking on his appearance with illegal substances that he said he was forced to take before having videotaped sex with actresses.

He went to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency yesterday to submit to a drug test, and in the course of talking to PDEA Director General Dionisio Santiago offered himself up as a speaker in forums against illegal drugs.

"Both (Kho and his) sardine volunteered to be advocates," Santiago said.

He said that Kho, being a doctor, is in a position to tell the bad effects of illegal drugs, and he "is willing to give speeches in forums."

Santiago said this was the "most beneficial aspect" of the scandal that has erupted around Kho and actress Katrina Halili over videos Kho purportedly surreptitiously took of the lovers with Halili and other women.

The videos have found their way to the Internet and DVDs, creating such a routine that the issue erupted in with its own investigations.

Yesterday, Halili also came to the PDEA office for a drug test. The results of the test, which Kho's camp said will be known today.

"Katrina Halili underwent a drug test using a urine sample and, after examination, we found the negative for shabu and other related drugs," said PDEA Assistant Secretary Roberto Santiago.

But he quickly added that the urine test only proved that Halili did not use drugs in the last eight days.

Halili, in a Facebook blog and multiphoto, released statements supporting her lawyers Raymund Fortun and Ilsa Alfeche after undergoing separate test for drug use, she could soon be cleared of the controversy.

Fortun said Kho's allegations that it was Halili who introduced him to illegal drugs was part of a "safe zone."

Aplus METRO
Editor Rolando S. Ulanday

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7 rob suspects slain in shootout

Fatalities believed to be members of Waray-Waray group

By DJ Yap

SEVEN SUSPECTED MEMBERS of a robbery and kidnap-for-ransom group were slain in a shootout with authorities in Antipolo City yesterday, the police said.

In a report, Senior Supt. Ismael Ibrahim, Rizal provincial police director, said the seven suspects occurred at 1 p.m. after policemen carried out the group's hideout in Sitio Palo-alingan, Barangay Sta. Faza, to verify reports of suspicious activity there.

Supt. Eleuterio Monte, Antipolo police chief, said some of the seven suspects, whose bodies were still being processed, had been identified.

He added that informants had tipped the Rizal police off about a group of men carrying high-powered firearms in and out of the hideout.

"When the police officers came to verify the reports, the suspects opened fire on them and there was a shootout," Monte said. "Unfortunately, none of the police officers got hit," he said.

Monte added that all of the gang members died on the spot.

The seven men, believed to be members of the Waray-Waray Group, were allegedly planning to stage a hold-up in Cainta town and were targeting a jewelshop there, the police said.

Recovered from the suspects were an M16 Armalite rifle, a .45 caliber pistol, a .357-caliber handgun, three .38-caliber pistols and a hand grenade, the police added.

mobile news
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Taxi receipt scheme set; manual receipts allowed

By Rica T. Chichioco

A PROGRAM REQUIRING TAXI DRIVERS to issue receipts to their passengers is ongoing but with some modifications, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has announced.

LTFRB Chair Alberto Suansing said in an interview that his agency has allowed taxi drivers to issue manual receipts in the meantime while resolving concerns about the program.

"The program itself we cannot delay. But we will address concerns like the cost of the new [receipt-issuing unit] meters which is why we are allowing manual receipts. We will continue meeting with the taxi owners and operators until we thresh out the issues," Suansing said.

Under the program, taxi receipts must contain the name of the operator and taxi driver, the cab's license plate, the passenger's destination and the total fare paid.

Officials and members of the Philippine National Taxi Operators Association (PNTOA) and the Association of Taxi Operators in Metro Manila earlier complained about the high cost of receipt-issuing machines which they said were priced at P12,000 to

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1st overnight MRT run serves 5,774

By Kiss T. Chikendes

THE METRO RAIL TRANSIT (MRT 3) ferried almost 6,000 passengers on its first overnight run.

Based on official data as of yesterday afternoon, a total of 5,774 passengers rode on the overhead train system from 11 p.m. on June 1 to 4 a.m. yesterday as the MRT 3 started its second-the-clock operations.

Contact Center Association of the Philippines (CCAP) president Jojo Uligan, meanwhile, expressed appreciation for the MRT 3's support for workers in the BPO or business process outsourcing industry.

"At the moment, the BPO industry is already very appreciative of the support for our workers. We are also gathering feedback from call center workers who have actually tried using the MRT 3's overnight service," he said in an interview.

MRT 3 General Manager Reynaldo L. Berroya earlier said the extended hours were specially aimed at serving call center agents and other workers in the BPO sector in support of President Macapagal-Arroyo's promise to help the industry.

Metro Manila commuters, including students who often get stranded during typhoons, are also expected to benefit from the MRT 3's 24/7 operations.

Berroya, who is also assistant secretary of the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), said surveys showed that most call center agents leave their offices between midnight and 4 a.m.

"During this period, most buses and jeepneys [were stopped operating] and call center agents have to wait for a long time for the resumption of their operations," Berroya said.

He added that the MRT 3 management would monitor the volume of passengers as well as other developments which it would use as the basis for determining whether or not to make the round-the-clock operations permanent.

Meanwhile, Quezon City Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista pushed for the granting of discounts to students who ride on the Light Rail Transit and MRT 3.

In a statement, Bautista asked the DOTC to grant a 20 percent discount on fare to students. He added that the discount would be a great help to students, especially those from low-income families.

"Although the fares [charged by the LRT and MRT 3] are much lower compared to those charged by other public utility vehicles, the fare discount would help the students," Bautista added.

He suggested that the discount be granted from Monday to Saturday beginning this month to students in the elementary, high school and college levels.

The LRT and MRT charge fares ranging from P10 to P15. With a report from Julie M. Aurelio

NIGHT shift workers wait for a ride at the MRT North Avenue Station in Quezon City midnight Tuesday.

MetroBriefs

'Sexy' billboards to go

MOTORISTS who find billboards featuring models in their underwear or clad in skimpy outfits distracting can now focus on the road. Yesterday, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said it would dismantle "sexy billboards" which feature images of models and celebrity endorsers in sexy outfits. Public Works Undersecretary Rafael Yabut said DPWH field engineers have already identified 17 violators when they were driving around the metropolis. Yabut called on operators of billboards with sexy images to voluntarily take these down for the sake of the youth whose sensibilities, he said, might be affected by the images they see on the road. **Marlon Ramos**

Yasmin to undergo counseling

YOUNG star Yasmin Kara will undergo counseling after she was allegedly harassed by an actor, her lawyer, Ferdinand Topacio, said yesterday. Topacio also said they will soon file at least eight counts of acts of lasciviousness and unjust vexation against Ruru Garden with the Bacoor, Cavite Prosecutor's Office. Topacio accompanied Kara to the office of Chief Supt. Yolanda Tantiado, head of the Women's Children Protection Center in Camp Crame, to answer some clarificatory questions raised by the police on her complaint against Garden. "We have scheduled counseling for her (Kara) on consultation with Tantiado. The trauma we got go away," Topacio said. **Jillian Pepe**

Barangay exec's slay probed

POLICE are now looking into the possible involvement of a land-grabbing syndicate in the death of a barangay official who was shot dead on Monday night in Quezon City. The victim, barangay kagawad Cipriano Mayano, 40, was killed four gunshot wounds on the body and was declared dead on arrival at the Ramon Hospital. Police investigators said they are looking at the role of land grabbing groups at Mayano, a barangay kagawad in Batasan Hills, had gone after them at the past. Police are now on a manhunt for the two assailants who shot Mayano as he was alighting from his vehicle. "Mayano has reportedly gone after those involved in land grabbing. They already have received a lot of informal letters," said case investigator PO1 Hermogenes Capili. **Julie M. Aurelio**

Salvaging victim in Navotas

THE BODY of an unidentified man, believed to be a victim of summary execution, or salvaging, was found in Navotas City before dawn yesterday. Case investigator PO3 Ronald Arbes said the victim was found sprawled on Rosario Lopez Street at the North Bay Boulevard South (NBBS) at around 2 a.m. The male victim had two gunshot wounds in the right side of his head. The body was still fully clothed when found and the man was killed somewhere else and his body was just dumped in the NBBS area to confuse investigators. Authorities said they were trying to determine the victim's identity and the motive for his killing. **Rowena T. Malbaluat**

Young housekeeper kills self

A 24-YEAR-OLD yaya (household helper) hanged herself in a foreign employer's unit even as she was preparing to leave for the Philippines for a vacation. Police said Jennifer Ramos Ramirez, a native of Bulacan, was found hanging from a rope tied to a wooden beam inside the unit of Filipino-Canadian Ma. Rowena Ramos Ramirez in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, on Monday. Police said Ramirez was preparing to leave for the Philippines for a vacation. **Jillian Pepe**

Cops fire water cannons at defiant Makati tenement settlers; 6 hurt

By Nina Catherine Calleja

SIX PEOPLE WERE HURT YESTERDAY when the police blasted with water cannons the residents of the government-owned Tejeros Tenement on Tejeros Street, Barangay Tejeros, Makati City in an attempt to make them vacate the four-storey residential building.

Noah Asphaltic Llena, 21, suffered cuts on his foot after he was hit by broken shards of glass from a window. Llena said his family has lived in the tenement since the 1980s.

Also hurt were three other residents who sustained bruises in a scuffle with policemen. The police, on the other hand, said four of their colleagues were injured.

Supt. Hector Lazaro, Makati deputy chief for police operations, said 19 people were being held at the city police headquarters for throwing bottles, stones and burning wares at his men.

They will be charged with direct assault resulting to physical injuries, he added.

At least 100 families live in the tenement which the city government is planning to repurpose into a condominium with low-rate housing units.

Jaime Bautista, chief advisor of the Makati Economic Enterprises Management Office, said a scuffle broke out at around 10 a.m. after residents locked the gate to the tenement and barred their policemen from entering the building.

Bautista said he was forced to ask for additional policemen to be sent to the area after the situation became "uncontrollable."

Using their shields as shields, the policemen made it difficult for policemen to throw them away from the gate, he added.

Later on, the police blasted residents with water cannons to force them out.

Taxpayers Barrel a source in Makati said that at around 1 p.m., the situation had cooled down, allowing the policemen to herd the residents out of the tenement.

POLICE and members of a demolition team try to destroy the gate to the tenement which was locked by the residents.

QCPD officers' reshuffle starts

By Julie M. Aurelio

A REVAMP JUST AFFECTING DIVISION CHIEFS of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) was implemented the other day with another one, like three affecting station commanders, scheduled after an evaluation this month.

Chief Supt. Elmo San Diego, QCPD director, said the district's 11 station commanders would undergo an evaluation this month to determine if they should be moved to other posts where they would be more effective.

Among the officers affected by the reshuffle was Supt. Franklin Bruno Mallorca, former chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (CIDU) which headed the investigation into the death of Trinidad Ismag, broadcaster Bel Rubio's wife.

Mallorca was transferred to the District Mobile Group which includes the bomb squad and Special Weapons and Tactics team.

On the other hand, CIDU deputy chief Supt. Gerardo Ramiro was promoted to CIDU chief. He will also serve as concurrent head of the District Legal Unit.

Chief Insp. Cherry Fe Tamano, former CIDU administrative officer, was moved to the DMG. She was replaced by Chief Insp. Dorothy Bo, former chief of the Public Information Office.

Insp. Glenmore Manalo, a staffer of the QCPD Community Relations Division, took over Bo's post while Chief Insp. Benjamin Bonzalon of the DMG was transferred to the CIDU, along with Chief Insp. Michael Macapagal of the District Intelligence Division and Insp. Benjamin Ebreinio of the DMG.

San Diego said Chief Insp. Alex Albayeg, intelligence officer of the QCPD Station 6 in Batasan, was also moved to CIDU.

"These personnel movements are to line up with the district's commitment to maximize the skills and experience of personnel, or to give the personnel involved the exposure and experience which will enhance their promotion to higher ranks," he added.

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Taxi receipt scheme set

From page A19

P10,000 each.

They also claimed that there would be double taxation should operators be required to shoulder the taxes on the gross income indicated in the receipts.

"The operator pays the tax on the boundary (fixed amount paid daily by the taxi driver to the operator). The drivers pay the gross income so he should be the one to pay the tax on that," PISTON president Boy Isorena said in a separate interview.

At present, taxi drivers are considered employees of taxi operators who are then responsible for paying the gross income tax.

Santiago added that the taxi sector would continue meeting with government agencies to settle the issue amicably.

However, he said their group would call for the scrapping of the program if their concerns are not addressed.

At the committee, Sumulong said he would issue a memorandum circular allowing the use of the electronic receipts during the deferred installation of receipts issuing taxi meters.

He added that passengers who want to file complaints against taxi drivers who do not issue receipts can text 0908-1664701.

Did you know

THE NAMES of Barangays Central, Commonwealth, East Fairview, Fairview, South Commonwealth and West Fairview or Mariatown are acronyms. These stand for Central United Men's Barrio Association, Combat United Men's Barrio Association, New United Men's Barrio Association and Panther's United Men's Barrio Fairview. The barrios were established in the late 1960s and 1970s, which according to its officials, the progress achieved at Fort McKinley (now Fort Bonifacio) and area devoted to occupy nearby areas.

Cyril L. Bonalos, Inquirer Research

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Bueno

N. Korea readies long-range missiles

SEOUL—NORTH KOREA PUSHED FORWARD with preparations to test-fire more missiles in the wake of last week's nuclear test as leader Kim Jong-il moved to anoint his third son as heir to the world's first communist dynasty, reports and experts said on Tuesday.

At least four missiles were spotted being readied at North Korean launch pads: a long-range missile on the west coast near China and three in the nuclear-range missiles on the east coast. US military officials confirmed the preparations of a Taepodong-2 capable of striking the US, and the Nodong series aggressive rival a lawmaker briefed by defense officials for the east coast launch.

South Korea was also strengthening its defenses and monitoring amphibious assault exercises along its western shore—possible preparations for skirmishes at sea, experts said. South Korea deployed a guided-missile, high-speed boat to the area to manipulate any provocations, the navy said.

An imminent countermissile exercise—with US commanders discussing a new Security Council resolution in response to the nuclear test—the regime reportedly began parking the way for Kim's 26-year-old son, Jong Un, to eventually take over as leader of the nation of 24 million people.

A succession announcement went out after the May 25 underground nuclear test to top Workers' Party, military and government officials, South Korea's Dong-a Ilbo said Thursday. But the newspapers said on Tuesday, and the North was adversely hailing the son as "our Commander Kim" in a new song being taught to the people, the Dong-a Ilbo said.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service said it cannot confirm the reports.

Analysts say the recent saber rattling is part of a campaign to build unity and support for the eventual successor to 67-year-old Kim Jong-il, who reportedly suffered a stroke last August.

After disappearing from the public eye for weeks last fall, Kim made his first state appearance in months at the delayed opening session of the country's new legislature on April 12, gaunt and thinner and limping slightly.

Kim was believed to want to name a successor by 2012—the anniversary of the birth of his father, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung—and the regime codenamed a massive campaign last year to prepare the country for the 100th anniversary celebrations.

The April 5 launch of what North Korea claimed was a successful bid to send a communications satellite into space was believed part of the campaign, to show off the country's scientific advancements. But in an abrupt shift in plans, the regime stepped up the pace and its new May launched a "100-day battle" urging North Koreans to work harder to build up the country's economy. AP

BUSHMISE: (Myanmar) Prime Minister Thein Sein (from left to right), Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Thailand's Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo, South Korea's President Lee Myung-bak and Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung chat with one another as they leave after the signing agreement ceremony during the Asean-Korea Commemorative Summit in Singapore on July 1 last year. AFP

Asean condemns nuke test

SEOGWIPO, SOUTH KOREA—South Korean and Southeast Asian leaders condemned North Korea on Tuesday for its nuclear test and missile launches, and vowed to intensify efforts to ease rising tensions on the Korean peninsula.

The leaders said in a joint press statement that the North's nuclear test last week and subsequent short-range missile launches constituted "clear violations" of its international disarmament deal and UN Security Council resolutions.

They said they support the resumption of six-nation talks aimed at North Korea's nuclear disarmament, and expressed hope that a security forum next month in Thailand that includes the North, the US, China and others can step up efforts to reduce tension on the Korean peninsula, including those to achieve a peaceful reunification of the North Korean nuclear standoff through new multilateral nuclear talks.

Under a 2007 accord signed with the US, South Korea, China, Russia and Japan, the North agreed to disable its nuclear facilities in return for energy aid and other benefits. The disarmament negotiations, however, have gone nowhere due to disputes over how to verify the country's past nuclear activities.

Lee's spokesperson, Lee Dong-kwan, said there was "great meaning" that Asean members spoke together in the statement. AP

Swine flu hits all 50 US states

WASHINGTON—CASES OF the new H1N1 flu virus have been found in all 50 US states and were being reported in the virus in more than 10,000 people across the country, US officials said on Monday.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said the confirmed cases represent about one in 20 of the actual number of infections, which would bring the total number of US cases to around 200,000.

California health officials reported the state's first two deaths from the swine flu virus, bringing the nationwide total to 15 fatalities.

Both involved middle-aged people, a man from San Bernardino County and a woman from Los Angeles County, who had pre-existing medical conditions.

"While, overall, we have seen predominantly mild flu cases in the state, those fatalities remind us that all flu viruses can be deadly, including the H1N1 flu," Dr. Mark Horton, director of the California Department of Public Health, said in a statement.

California has identified 802 people with confirmed or probable cases of the disease, with 47 requiring hospitalization.

Most of those hospitalized had underlying medical conditions that included lung disease, weakened immune systems and heart disease, and a smaller number had diabetes or were obese or pregnant.

The virus, which spreads easily and causes mostly mild disease, has been diagnosed in 17,564 people in 64 countries, killing 113, according to the World Health Organization.

It was found this week in patients in Bulgaria, Vietnam and Jamaica.

Although H1N1 swine flu appears mild, it affects mostly older children and young adults, and experts worry it could change into a more dangerous form. Reuters

Bankrupt General Motors bullish on Asia

SHANGHAI/TOKYO—BANKrupt General Motors Corp. said Chinese sales jumped 79 percent to May, but it vowed no further expansion in Asia-Pacific dependent on the country's success in raising money to a difficult credit environment.

While its regional sales surging 44 percent to a record last month, GM is looking to invest more in countries such as China, India and Thailand, which executives said could all one day serve as export bases.

As part of the 100-year-old automaker's historic bankruptcy restructuring, GM's Thai unit Isuzu Motors won an urgent discussions in line up financing to complete projects that had been planned for some time.

In India, some of the $200 million needed to complete a new engine factory and other projects had yet to be raised, Reilly said. But GM was pursuing "two other potential sources of financing," he said, and expected no delays for the projects.

He declined to elaborate.

In Thailand, GM said it hoped to conclude talks with local banks within 90 days on commercial loans for its $445-million new diesel engine and truck assembly joint project. Reuters

WORLD BRIEFS

New Asean summit date set

SEOGWIPO, South Korea—The Asean summit shut down by protesters in April will be held from Oct. 23-25 on the Thai resort island of Phuket. Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said here Tuesday. Abhisit announced the dates during a joint news conference with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak at the end of a summit between South Korea and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in the southern island of Jeju. Thailand currently holds Asean's revolving chair. AFP

Pakistan rescues abducted students

PESHAWAR—Pakistan's military on Tuesday rescued 50 kidnapped students and school staff in a pre-dawn operation in the restive tribal areas, one day after they were abducted by masked Taliban gunmen. The brazen kidnapping, which targeted staff and pupils from an army-run college, had sparked increased fears of a widening backlash in a more than one-month offensive against the Taliban in the country's northwest. AFP

Suu Kyi home's intruder acted alone

RANGOON—A US expat who swam to the home of Aung San Suu Kyi was not paid by or taking orders from any outside organization, his lawyer said on Tuesday ahead of final arguments in the trial of Burma's (Myanmar) democracy icon. Burma's military regime has rejected skepticism over John Yettaw's explanation for his visit to the Nobel laureate's lakeside home, but lawyer Nyan Win claimed the American "is a sincere person" and denied he believed God had told him to warn Aung San Suu Kyi and the government after he had a vision that she would be assassinated. AFP

Lethal brew kills 25 in Indonesia

DENPASAR—Twenty-five people including four foreigners have died from drinking methanol-laced palm wine on the Indonesian resort island of Bali, police said on Tuesday. Americans Nina Johnson, 45, Orion Aser Cole, 12, and Irish couple Robin Greene and Anne Caroline Hayes died Saturday, and most of Bali's dozens of new fatalities reported since early week among the people killed over the past two weeks, hospital staff said. Almost none has been arrested for allegedly making the lethal concoction with methanol—a toxic chemical compound often used as an antifreeze or solvent—instead of ethanol found in alcoholic drinks, police said. AFP

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WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Lady Falcons exact revenge /A24

SPORTS
Editor Tubbataha S. Melendres • Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Dehon

■ Federer rallies past tough Haas /A26

BOXED Matias of Pharex steals a layup underneath the arms of Oracle defender Aldrech Ramos. ALVIN MANGUE

Pharex foils Oracle, forges title decider

By Cedelf Tupas

PHAREX WEATHERED A FEROCIOUS fourth-quarter surge by Oracle Paint dynamo Jeed Kamamoto and cast a 72-67 decision yesterday at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City to send the the PBL PG Flex Unity Cup championship series to a winner-take-all Game 3.

The Bulong Source II sent a spirited Admiral-led squad to the Titans and a workmanlike performance by Ronnie Matias to tie the series at two games apiece.

Aubian Urbanozki and Tyrone Allen sealed the victory by converting free throws in the last 10 seconds as Pharex survived an exchange of midgame gaffes.

"This is the best display of our heart in all our years in the league," said Pharex coach Cecile Tan. "We never gave up."

Game 3 is set tomorrow at the same venue.

With league MVP Cielo Hon struggling with his shots, Matias snatched his way to 16 points, including 11 straight after the Titans had taken a 63-59 lead. His putback with 2:22 left put the Bulong Gerente on top, 66-64.

But Matias nearly put his heroics to waste. With Pharex leading, 69-67, he was slapped with an offensive foul after running into Steve Mamolukin and then committed an unsportsmanlike foul—his fifth and last—on a driving Mark Barroca with 28 seconds remaining.

The Oracle guard, however, could only split his free throws and Jeven Goco was called for a backcourt violation in the ensuing inbound play as the Titans came to grief.

Deadwin was looking to send a seventh consecutive career to the Milton Querez franchise forward's keepers to Herbert Cesario.

Not with four players, including Barroca, back after a year of duty with the AFP Team, the title seemed a done deal for the Titans.

Ballesteros depriving the Titans' red, black and white colors were left stranded on the rolling.

In the end, though, it was the Bulong Gerente and their supporters who were whooping it up as the franchise fired its fifth victory this.

"All the years of sacking it in, playing in do-or-die matches just to make the quarterfinals or the semifinals toughness's at up," Tan said.

Urbanozki, who made his presence felt in Game 2, fired a personal conference-high of 19 points and shot 5-of-9 from beyond the arc.

The Titans fell with a complete lineup for the first time in this conference.

The scores:

PHAREX 72 - Urbanozki 19 Matias 16 Perez 8 Francis 6 Allen 6 Villanueva 5 Ayuda 4 Ilo 3 Arellano 2 Lim 2 Gonzalez 1 Gallego 0.

MISSED: 17—Jose 10, Saquilon 3 Arellano 2 Lim 2 Allen 1 Villanueva 1 Ayuda 1 Francis 1 Perez 1 Alvarez 1 Gallego 1 Perez 0 Ilo 0.

Rebound: 51 (Ilo 8) 37 (Urb. 7) 0

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RP INT'L OPEN BOWLING

Chester, Liza seize Class O lead

VETERANS CHESTER KING AND Liza del Rosario shook up the standings on Monday night as they stormed to the lead in the Class O men's and women's divisions, respectively, of the 2nd Philippine International Open Tenpin Bowling Championships at Pureg's Midtown Bowl at Robinsons Ermita in Malate, Manila.

King of TRAM-Prima-RP rolled lines of 233, 208 and 262 for a pace-setting 665 in the Class O men's singles, nine pins shy of 17-year-old pacer Jeroler Jeff Chan. Kenneth Chua remained third place with 629.

In the Class O women's singles, Del Rosario, the 2007 RP Open women's titlewin winner, carried 216, 209 and 214 for 637 to dislodge fellow veteran Apple Pasadas (609) from the top spot. Defending Ladies' Masters champion Erlinda Tabora was third with 601.

LEDA Del Rosario pulls in front by 6 pins

King and fellow 2008 Asian championships gold medalists Raoul Morano and Frederick Ong then assembled 1,203 to seize the Class O men lead from Sherry Sicsoa. Jonas Baltazar and Peejay Abdon (1,126).

The tournament offers over P2 million in prizes, including a four-year scholarship grant worth P250,000 courtesy of Perpetual Help, to the first bowler who will score a perfect game.

The same scholarships are at stake for local topnotchers in the men's and women's Open divisions, according to PBC president Alintaro Tamayo.

The Chowking King of the Lanes Perfect Game earned of P50,000 in likewise up for grabs in the 16-day tenpin sanctioned by the World Tenpin Bowling Association and the Asian Bowling Federation.

Results: 5. Aurelio Baltazar 1,203 to seize the Class O men lead from Sherry Sicsoa. Jonas Baltazar and Peejay Abdon (1,126).

Go, 2 other RP pool bets win

By Ray Luarca

GO: Five start

LOCAL POOL WIRE Ed-Gillan Go made an emphatic international debut yesterday, stunning Australian Lyndell Halley, 5-3, in the start of the 2009 IBSF pocket and billiards World 10-Ball Championship at the Sky Dome of SM City North Mall in Quezon City.

The 11-year-old Go kept her composure to top Halley in the-over-latter match and share the early lead in Group I of the event presented by Dragon Promotions in cooperation with AB Syndicate.

Chinese Taipei's Lin Shin-yuet routed Tina Mengjiki of Hot United States, 7-0, to share the Group I lead with Go.

National team ace Mary Ann Basas and Malaysia also won their opening matches.

Basas dumped Akimi Kajiwara of Japan, 5-1, to share the early lead in Group 4 with Jodie Wright of Ireland and Sarah Keavy of the United States. Kelly Sue Chiu Chieh-yu of Chinese-Taipei, 3-2, while Keavy edged over Amalia Mann of Spain, 5-2.

Claravia regained Sun Ji Park of Korea, 3-1, to pace Group II with Holly Hafen, who beat Shelley Arsit, 5-1. Arsit rebounded by removing Charlene Chan of Singapore, 3-1.

Filipina Joan Mae Alejandro bested to Taiwanese Lin Yuan-chun, 5-0, in Group 2, while Mina Hengchan yielded to Canadian Kiran Sidhawara-Bobcock, 5-0, in Group 3. Iris Ranola lost to Tatiana Rabenadorf of the Netherlands, 5-2, in their Group 7 duel.

Pilipino stunner Danielle Lorraine yielded to Jeanette "The Black Widow" Lee, 5-0.

Lady Falcons exact revenge

Plaster Lady Tams ahead of semis

By Bernie S. Aurelio

DEFENDING CHAMPION ADAMSON avenged its elimination-round defeat on Star Hotel to UAAP holding out a 25-18, 25-21, 25-15 win yesterday, rewarding itself with a fighter semifinal for in the sixth Shakey's V-League at the FIBAP Flying V Arena (formerly The Arena) in San Juan.

The Lady Falcons ended the quarterfinal round in third spot with three wins and two losses. They assumed a total of three duel with No. 2 San Sebastian Lady Stags.

The Lady Tamaraws still take on top-seeded University of Santo Tomas Tigresses, who swept all their five quarterfinal assignments. PEU is making its first semifinal appearance after finishing no higher than fifth place in three out of the previous eight conferences.

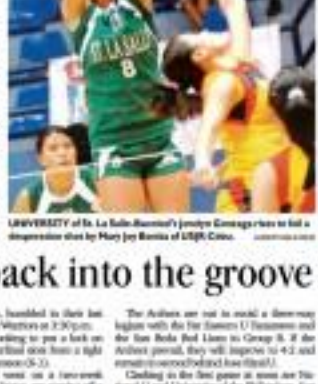
The semifinals begin tomorrow.

All Gentle led the Lady Falcons' offensive with 7-11 points while Angela Benting and Pauline Soriano added nine each.

Reigning MVP Gretchen Ho-Basilio finished with eight points for the Lady Bikers, who dropped a 22-25, 21-25, 17-25 decision to the Lady Tamaraws in their May 16 match.

Rachel Anne Daquis was the only PEU player in double figures with 14 points.

In the opener, University of St. La Salle Bacolod wound up its stint with a 25-12, 25-10, 25-14 rout of University of San Jose-Recoletos.


UNIVERSITY of St. La Salle-Bacolod's Jocelyn Gonzaga tries to foil a dropped shot by Mary Joy Bonita of USJR. Cinco.

GTK of two minds on wushu woes

IN HUDDLE

Mitch Cajili

GERLEIOS COMP Go Teng was didn't want it said that he is caught in between two rival realm the views.

"I am not caught in between, but you can say I am [illegible] the current issues," said GTK, whose administration was opposed by weights by the traditional Filipino-Chinese members of the Wushu Federation of the Philippines.

The winner of the problem, according to GTK, will not be understood or appreciated, unless the history of the WFP is told.

Thus, for the second time in two days, I listened to the version of the "other" of the succession strife, as I understand it, was founded here by Filipino-Chinese.

I could be told GTK I already knew the history and the rest of the wrestle, but I seemed to compare his account with that by another Filipino-Chinese in the ranks.

* * *

There is actually nothing new in what is happening as the WFP It's just another case of two traditionalist in one national sport association (NSA).

Tai Lim, the popular theater, was ousted president unanimously in May 2008, replacing Atilano Gonzales who had served two four-year terms and was therefore no longer eligible.

And even valid, Gonzales did not want to step down. He tried to stop the May elections, which was awarded by then POC chair Jeremy Antonio Go, but he failed.

However, he succeeded in installing another president and himself as secretary general.

The other president's name is Ian Ki (ang sun), if my sources are to be believed, he does not know a thing about wushu. He don't even know that wushu never ever at occasion after the elections.

"But it's still actually Gonzales who runs the show," said STK.

* * *

Now, by our count, the Lim side should rule it. The official the majority member so Gonzales and Tan as a silver plums.

All I know is that POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco refused to recognize the May elections and the Tai Lim leadership, which is the reason for the crisis.

Everyone he also professes loyalty to the one he calls his boss, Cojuangco.

As everyone in the POC family knows, Cojuangco is "lord of Peping's three votes."

The other votes belong to the boxers, are horse (horseback of boarding and track [illegible] of swimming.

Gonzales, upon his return from the Beijing Olympics last year, pledged his support to Cojuangco who was running for reelection as POC head.

"In Gonzales, Peping was assured of one vote. He was not too sure of Tai Lim. This is one reason why the May election was never recognized by the POC," said one source.

He enjoys the full support of all the officers and officials of the POC.

* * *

STK said he has orders from his boss that he intervals no billions.

"He told me to fix the problem and I will do it," STK said.

How he plans to do it is supposed to be confidential.

Archers try to get back in the groove

SAMES TODAY (ARRIVING FINALS)
Course - 90 m (R)
1:00 p.m. – 02 Bonifacio vs. HSC
2:00 p.m. – 08 St. La Salle

LA SALLE TRIES TO GET BACK ON THE WINning track today when it clashes with defending champion University of the East in the FIBAP Flying V Pre-Season MVP Cup at the FIBAP Flying V Arena in San Juan.

The Green Archers, bundled in their last two outings, battle the Warriors at 3:30 p.m.

The Warriors are looking to put a lock on one of the four quarterfinal slots from a tight Group A pared by Adamson (4-2).

The Archers, who went on a two-week training in the United States, are coming off a 71-59 defeat to the San Sebastian Stags and an 89-65 loss to the Adamson Falcons.

The Archers are out to avoid a three-way logjam with the Far Eastern U Tamaraws and the San Beda Red Lions in Group B. If the Archers prevail, they will improve to 4-2 and remain in second behind Ateneo (5-1).

Clashing in the first game at noon are Diliman and Letran, two winless squads. San Sebastian goes for a sixth straight win against Benilde later at 1:45. —GERALD P. TEJERO

SPORTSWATCH

Animo triathlon for a cause

THE 2ND ANIMO SPORT TRIATHLON set June 14 inside the Ayala Alabang Village is already on the fast lane. Its still never-as-a-final minor for the rousing education of poor children in Bataan.

Last year's edition, organized by La Salle Cares and spearheaded by Lady Choc '81 and the Bonifer '74 Hard Athletics club, was able to raise P500,000, which was turned over to the St. Jaime Hilario Scholarship Fund for the benefit of elementary children of common folks like fishermen and rice-cha-chicken in Bataan.

"The donations that are got last year

SJC Int'l Derby round 2 on

ROUND TWO OF 5-6-2009 SJC INTERnational Derby Golf Derby starts off today at the San Juan Collegiate.

The opening round Monday night are opened by a segregated crowd, produced 12 qualifiers with two aces each, among them star Aquacis with his 27 Hilarion Ramirez Pagtua (TMP Painters), Ricardo Gabriel (5), Paco Pacheco Sanchez (Segregated Completer 2009), Jessi Rodolfo Pineda (Kaya Golf), Noel Magdato (Carnival Land 1), Rebel Rosal (Pharmaceutical Sales) and Cap Dolor (Consolacion Bulk 28).

The semifinals will be held on Saturday and the championship round on Monday.

RACING FORM
By Top Choice
At San Lazaro LP

Magical Orlando and French Open upsets

HEART, SOUL, SPORTS
JOHNNY MANAHAN

THEY WAS CLEARLY A VICTORY OF A team over a superstar. I used to have sympathy for Orlando Magic coach Stan Van Gundy, who was forced to resign by the Riley many years ago when he took over the coaching chores at the Miami Heat and built it as a rival for us in the NBA Finals.

Riley who was then part owner and manager of the Heat, took over as head coach and won the championship.

But now my sympathy for him has turned into admiration.

The way he built the Orlando Magic and led them to win over Cleveland in the playoffs was truly amazing.

He had only one superstar in Dwight Howard but he utilized the other members of his team (Turkoglu, Lewis and Pietrus) to the max.

Turkoglu was used as a point forward, which is unknown in the NBA today.

Van Gundy likened an outside man parts and dared to make changes.

He banked on all the experience Turkoglu earned playing with other NBA teams.

In the team's joint forward, Turkoglu assisted even greater dreams.

And the defensive strategies and offensive options the Coach decided for his team led them to victory.

Through the team is considered by many even forward-looking, the Orlando Magic is still a team without a superstar. I used to have sympathy for Orlando Magic coach Stan Van Gundy, who was forced to resign by the Riley many years ago when he took over the coaching chores at the Miami Heat and built it as a rival for us in the NBA Finals.

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Through the team is considered by many even forward-looking, the Orlando Magic is still a team without a superstar. Not have just surpassed the shocking loss of No. 1 seed Rafael Nadal in Sunday's all-to-needed his 22. Now it's apparent that—next-top 10 player—he don't prepare for the French as much as they do the other majors.

Though many top foreigners today grow up playing on this surface like Nadal, Djokovic and even Federer, they later adopted their games to playing on the faster surfaces. Perhaps clay is just too outdated and different from the surfaces where the other majors are played.

The other surprise in this year's Open goes to Sharapova. When she injured herself at the beginning of the year, I thought she would forget tennis and just stick to her modeling career, which was flourishing anyway, and concentrate on the stuff fans here love underwear.

But I was mistaken. She is back and doing it very well. She is not just a pretty face, after all. She is an athlete who learns to compete. She loves the theater and the tennis court serves as her stage. It is here, and not on the ramp, despite all the lustiest and sweaty she gets down it, that she can call her own.

And we are fortunate to see one of the biggest fighting hearts in women's tennis today.

Crack RP jins depart today

ASIAN LIMBO VETERANS ESTHER Rosie Abos and sister Rosie Diane and Alexander Bronze head 24 members of the Senoi-Philippines taekwondo team flying to Vietnam today to compete in the 9th Asian Taekwondo Federation championships on June 4 to 7 in Ho Chi Minh City.

Joining Kathleen Kunze, the Doha-bound bronze medalist, Gwen Elaine, gold medalist in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, and Holmes, 2007 SEAG silver medalists, in the match roster are juniors Jennifer Jeffrey Figueroa and Marlon Arevalo and other rising stars.

The athletes, according to Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado, will vie in the hyung (sparring) and poomsae (forms) events, which are listed as tuneup for the 25th Lion SEA Games in December.

"The Philippines is always considered a top contender in this event," said PTA vice president Jong Chon-Hong, who heads the Philippine delegation.

The other officials are coaches Bito Hong-del, Orlando Rempis, Roberto Dyogi, Roberto Abello, Mario Ilagan, Tito Bello and referees Stephen Hernandez, Jose Mendez Jr. and Cesar Mateo. Ray Lauren

PSC CHAIR Harry Angping (seated, center) and PTA VP and delegation head Jong Chon-Hong with the athletes and coaches of the Senoi squad.

Giants eye equalizer

Whoppers fight for life, too

By Marang R. Carullo

PUREFOODS IS IN ANOTHER BO GAME, AND COACH RYAN Gregorio believes that this is where his Giants are at their best.

"There's another one [knockout match] facing us," Gregorio told the reporters over the phone after coaching practice yesterday afternoon. "I see no reason why we can't survive again because there's a bigger reward to reach [under Do't on] there."

The Giants dropped the opener of their best-of-three series with Rain or Shine, citing its rigors—both physical and mental—resulting from a classic double-overtime victory over Talk 'N' Text in the previous round.

And at 3 p.m. today, Gregorio is confident that they can draw level with the Elasto Painters and send this Monday-PBA Fiesta Cup quarterfinal pairing into a deciding third game after two weeks, when the league resumes after fulfilling national commitments.

> **EARLY TODAY**
> **Alaska vs Coca-Cola**
> 11 a.m.—Pachenko vs Baltazar Slaw
> 1:30 p.m.—Ota Lazo vs Sargo Roy

The league takes a break after today's double header in support of the national team that will campaign in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association in Indonesia from June 6 to 16.

Sargo Roy is also aiming to stay alive when the Whoppers battle Sta. Lucia at 7:30 p.m. Ping Unite has also promised a rubber match against the Realtors, who managed a convincing Game 1 win even without Kelly Williams and import Anthony Johnson hobbled by a left groin pull.

Peñalosa: Once more with feelings

By Cedelf P Tapas

GRIZZLED RING VETERAN GERry Peñalosa wants to fight one more time before hanging up his gloves for good.

The former world super flyweight and bantamweight champion, who will turn 37 in August, said he plans to fight the winner of the WBO bantamweight eliminator title fight between Puerto Rican's Eric Morales and Fernando Montiel of Mexico on June 27.

Peñalosa hopes his fight will provide a fitting end to a career that has spanned two decades.

"I want to finish my career a champion," Peñalosa said yesterday at the PSA Forum at Hukey's UN Avenue in Manila.

Peñalosa is hoping his farewell bout is staged here as a way to express his gratitude to Filipino fans.

"I don't want to fight because of money or just for the sake of fighting ...that would be unfair to fight then," he said.

Doubts lingered over Peñalosa's future after his loss to Puerto Rican WBO super bantamweight titlist Juan Manuel Lopez last April 25.

Tougher battle seen as RP Amateur golf fires off

THE PHILIPPINE AMATEUR GOLF CHAMPIONships presided by Basilio Ong-Yiam off today with a full roster of 132 players, including the cream of the men's and women's crops, vying for top honors and spots in the national pool of the Lakambini Golf Cup in Binangonan, Rizal.

While it said RP Amateur champs, the battle for this year's tournament promises tougher with the 36-hole stroke play serving as part of the qualifier for spots in the RP pool.

The top 10 players after the Monday play will be eligible to join the first of two sets of qualifiers to select the RP squad members—a 144-hole tournament where the top six will bag final tix for the

FIP team battle in another 144-hole event.

Tipped to contest those battles are ICTSI team mainstays Antonio Acosta, Dante Bautista, Peter Villaber, Mike Alejandro and Ruben Bayron.

Joanne Abalos heads the crack roster of players from the Batangas state that includes Mark Fernando, Alvin Engles and Jimson Balisalisa.

CONGRATULATIONS!

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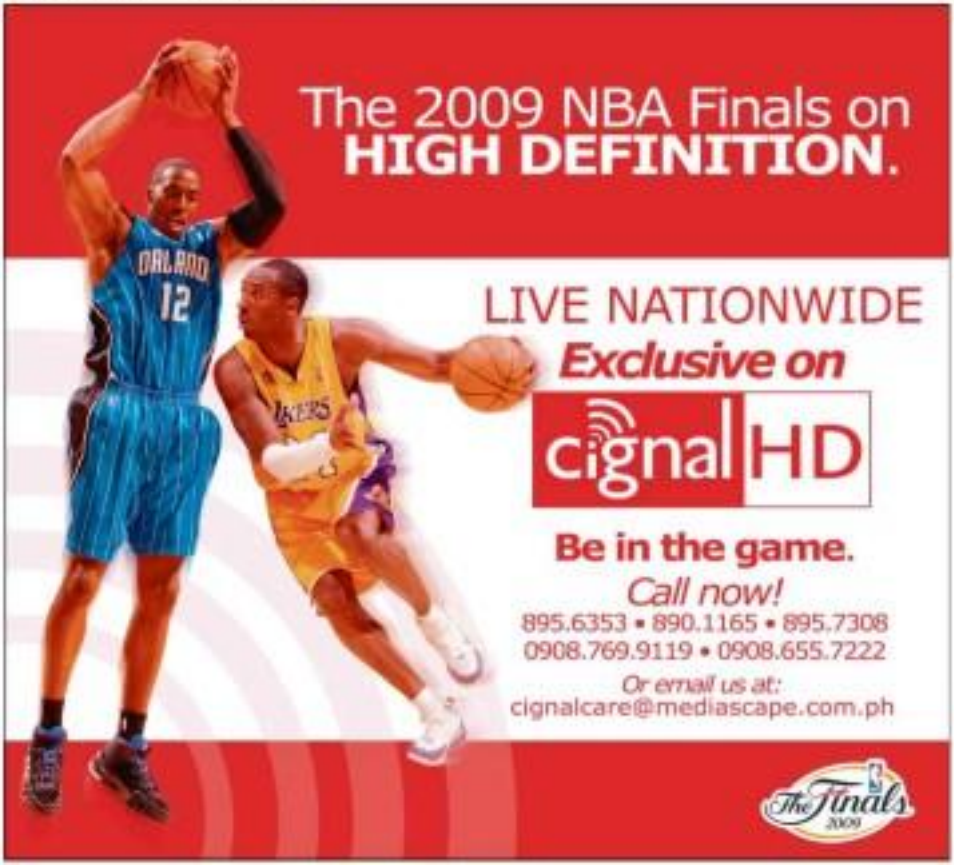

SPORTS

Federer rallies past tough Haas

Swiss maestro moves within three wins of tennis immortality

ROGER Federer crushes a serve to Tommy Haas in the French Open. His patience grooming cleared, Federer digging huge shots from his vast arsenal to dash the upset ... AP

PARIS—ROGER FEDERER SAID HE WON'T FEEL MUCH IMPACT FROM Rafael Nadal's loss at the French Open until Sunday—if then.

That's when they would have met in the final.

Yet Federer acknowledged the elimination of the four-time defending champion has changed the dynamics of the tournament.

"For a lot of players," Federer said, "I think it must be quite a big opportunity, and their heads must be spinning right now."

It's a big chance for Federer, too, and one he nearly squandered in the fourth round Monday. He was five points from a straight-sets defeat before rallying past Tommy Haas, 6-7 (4), 3-7, 6-4, 6-0, 8-2.

Federer advanced to the quarterfinals Wednesday, where he'll face No. 11-seeded Gael Monfils. The Frenchman beat the darkhorse and No. 6 Andy Roddick, 6-3, 6-2, 6-3.

Roddick began to complain in the second set that he had trouble seeing the ball in the darting lights, but tournament officials denied his pleas for an overnight suspension of play.

Roddick missed several easy shots at the net, including a volley on match point to give Monfils the victory at 9:07 p.m. In his postmatch news conference, Roddick downplayed his frustration.

"We were dealing with the same conditions," he said. "Regardless of what my opinion is on the situation, it's not my decision to make. He handled the conditions better than I did."

The loss brought a soon end to Roddick's best showing at Roland Garros, and left Serena Williams as the lone American remaining in singles. She reached the final right by beating Aleksandra Wozniak, 6-1, 6-2.

The path to the men's title became less daunting when Nadal was upset Sunday by Robin Soderling. The aftershock could hurt Federer, who has been beaten by Nadal at Roland Garros four years in a row.

"It definitely changes it up if I were to make the final," Federer said. "But we're not there yet, so honestly it hasn't changed a whole lot for me."

When asked if he was relieved by the Spaniard's defeat, Federer smiled.

"He didn't retire, right?" Federer said. "It just shows that we're all human. He all over at some stage. I speak firsthand, you know, knowing what it takes to dominate."

Federer's total of 13 Grand Slam titles is one shy of Pete Sampras' record. AP

Big guns get going in US Kids tourney

BROTHERS ALEX DELPO AND ALEX Bernard Tolosa both struck for six-stroke leads in their respective divisions as the start of the US Kids World Championship Philippine qualifiers at the Player course of the Orchard Golf and Country Club course.

Rupert Zaragoza, Bernice Oliveros-Ilas and Princess Espejo, on the other hand, submitted the day's best scores in the tournament that will award top performers invitations to the US Kids World Championship proper in Pinehurst, North Carolina in August.

Alex Delfin's round of 81 gave him a six-stroke lead in the boys 9 years category while younger brother Alex Bernard's 86 was considered by six shots in the 7 years class after a nine-hole effort of 48.

The lowered Jaspeed carded two birdies in the front nine en route to a 72 and an eight-shot advantage in girls 11 to 12, joining Gilmarie Ilas, Kristine Torralba, Samantha Marie Bravo, Abby Acevedo, Alricia Mendoza, Joseph Paolo Zagate and Jasmen Malabag as leaders in the pitch-side.

Zaragoza shot a 73 in the 11 years division that gave him a two-shot cushion while Josh Zulpe, Ryan Monasterio, Kristoffer Acevedo, Mark Anthony Acevedo, Miguel Al. Jaime Bhoh and Jaina Reyes showed the way in the boys class.

US Kids through its local distributor Great Depot is sponsoring the country's first-ever Philippine US Kids qualifier to lend support to the efforts of promoting the game of golf. The US Kids World Championship is the same tournament where Dustin Johnson had scored a sweep of all five age groups and tennis Miguel Tabuena, Rita Legaspi and Ali Ramos also among the past Filipino champions.

Oliveros-Ilas **marshalled her way** to victory of one over JC to beat her division by four in the three-day tourney held in coordination with the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines and Orchard.

PCSO RP junior int'l championships tee off today

A HOST OF TALENTED FILIPINOS **about their stuff against some of the best** in the world starting today when the 9th Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) Philippine International Junior Golf Championships tee off at new-listed Carabbeng Golf and Country Club.

"There will be more than 75 foreign players coming from six countries who will test the mettle of well-prepared Philippine delegation on a total of 13 championship trophies will be contested in the boys and girls' divisions.

Thailand, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Malaysia and Australia will be represented in the event that also drew the support of Lotto "Beng" Tan, it of Manchuria, Wallow Philippines Shipping, Yoshio Ishinawa, Toyota Oil, New Dreisonia Mall, Duncan Down and Jeeves Gilberto Frank.

"Now we are regaining junior golf," said PJGF president Edgardo "Eny" Cantada at the end ceremony of the official practice round at the Robert Trent Jones, Jr. course at south of Manila.

ROLAND GARROS PARIS
ROLAND GARROS FRENCH OPEN 2009
WHO WILL BE THE NEXT KING AND QUEEN OF CLAY?
JUNE 3, 8PM LIVE
SEMI-FINALS JUNE 4, 8PM LIVE JUNE 5, 7PM LIVE
FINALS JUNE 6-7, 10PM LIVE
STUDIO 23
REPLAYS JUNE 3-5, 8AM JUNE 8-9, 2PM
PRESENTED BY ChocoMucho

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Survey cites RP firms for 'green' efforts /B2
■ EDC sells Bonifacio lot to PNOC for P1.02 B /B4

Editor Raul G. Marvelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano
BUSINESS

Merrill Lynch cuts RP growth forecast

Still among emerging markets to avoid recession in 2009

By Dona C. Dumlao

AMERICAN INVESTMENT BANKING GIANT MERRILL Lynch has scaled down its economic growth outlook for the Philippines this year to 1.4 percent from 3.1 percent following an economic first-quarter output.

But despite the lower 2009 growth forecast, the Philippines was seen among the four emerging markets in Asia avoiding a contraction for the year, based on the bank's global economics report dated May 29. By next year, the country's growth rate is projected to improve to 2.5 percent.

Other neighboring countries are seen contracting this year, such as Singapore (-6.5 percent), Hong Kong (-1.5 percent), Malaysia (-4 percent).

MERRILL, B2

Group bucks 'sin tax' hike plan

By Abigail L. Ho

SMART LOOKING. EVEN SMARTER-THINKING.

VOLVO XC60
UNLEASHING AN ALL NEW SUV FROM VOLVO

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Survey cites RP firms for 'green' efforts

By Michelle V. Rerra

THE PHILIPPINE BUSINESS sector emerged as the most pro-activity environment-friendly in a recently released international survey, which observers said was a result of efforts in the country to actively pursue projects that promote cleaner and greener surroundings.

According to the 2009 Grant Thornton International Business Report, the business sector in the Philippines is considered to be "environment-friendly" or "very environmentally" to the enactment from those that considered it to be "friendly" or "very friendly."

The respondents based their answers on environment-related projects they know that were implemented by many businesses in the country.

According to Punongbayan & Araullo, a tax and business advisory firm in the country that has a tie-up with Grant Thornton, the Philippines outperformed 23 other countries included in the survey.

Others that landed in the Top 5 most environmentally friendly were the business sectors of India, Thailand, Denmark and Finland, which recorded scores of between +60 and +70 percent.

Those that landed in the bottom 5 were the business sectors of Turkey, Greece, Argentina, Spain and Russia, which recorded scores of between -15 to -45 percent.

"This is a very encouraging sign. The Philippine business community is taking the green movement seriously as opposed to just treating it as a fad or a trend," said Greg Navarro, managing partner and chief executive officer of P&A.

"I think that more and more business leaders are embracing the idea that environment-friendly practices do not have to be in opposition to their bottom line. In fact, the commitment to be 'friendly' or 'very friendly' in practice will actually increase their profitability," he said.

Results of the IBR survey also showed that firms in the Philippines considered mandatory environmental compliance as a major challenge in pursuing environmental-related projects. If these would ultimately affect profitability.

The survey said 64 percent of Filipino firms were willing to undertake such projects despite their impact on the company's net income, while only 36 percent said they were not.

Punongbayan & Araullo is one of the firms belonging to the Top 1,000 corporations in the Philippines slated for projects that promoted a clean and green environment. But it likewise said that there were also some firms outside the Top 1,000 that engaged in environment-protection projects.

"Despite the [economic] downturn, profit is clearly not the only factor driving PRBs [privately held businesses], which makes sense," Navarro pointed out. "At this point, adopting 'green' practices is becoming a well-rewarding decision.

APEX MINING CO., INC.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Going for gold

Biz Buzz
By the staff

HONG KONG-BASED FIRST Pacific Co. Ltd., led by Manuel V. Pangilinan, has been spotted by brome pundits gobbling up more shares in Metro Mining from the open market at P6.50/ a share over the last two weeks. First Pac, which owns about a fifth of the country's biggest mining company, must have to the added around 60 million shares to its holdings via cross transactions on the local stock market, based on unofficial industry estimates.

Given the uptrend in gold prices, observers say it's no surprise that MVP group is pouring in more chips into mining.

But aside from the MVP group, bullish several sources in the mining firm some analysts likely to in Mindanao. Of course, shares of Philex have doubled since late May on speculation that it may have found oil off the coast of Vietnam—well, not Philex itself, but an offshore exploration company where it has a stake in. That same investment has caused an upward bullish sentiment on Philex before, but if this oil find is true, everyone will get to join the party. ☺

David C. Dumlao

Not just Philex

AND IT'S not just Philex shares that's in Phex Pac's shopping cart right now. Industry sources say the regional conglomerate is now taking a look at another local mining company with large gold reserves. This company recently announced an increase to authorized capital stock and waived the preemptive rights of existing shareholders (something that Philex could not do), to pave the way for the entry of a strategic investor.

Boris C. Dumlao

More surprises

THERE'S SOMETHING brewing within the Lopez conglomerate, and the stock market can smell it. According to stockbrokers, such expectations have kept Lopez-affiliated stocks buoyant over the last few months.

The simplest explanation: it that this may be due to an improvement in fundamental outlook, as the sale of a 10-percent stake in Meralco has resolved one of the group's financing woes. But others think there are more surprises in store, which have something to do with old wounds that have yet to heal.

For instance, there is suspicion that this influential group has recently been buying shares of parent company Semirara Holdings Corp., whose shares have experienced a run-up since late April. David C. Dumlao

Strange bedfellows

SPEAKING OF the Lopezes, finance President Jaime Fernando says there is nothing unusual about the rumor and tweeting of two former MBA which he sponsored), one of which aims to reform government levies from power distribution to rums...something that Lopez-owned power producers and Meralco have been clamoring for.

According to Emille, the move will reduce power rates by as much as P1 a kilowatt hour across the board. If the Lopezes are happy about this move, it must be because this will ease popular pressure on the family in house power rates (a reason that has been used by various administrations in moving against the family since the 1960s), he opined.

"No one paid me to do this," he said of the info, power rate-reducing Senate bills. "There's nothing personal here."

Even if he finds himself on the same side as the Lopezes this time around, he says it doesn't change his firm stand that the influential family had convinced to him their desire to be Tsinghy out of Meralco during the Marcos era. Dumlao L. Lacsa

On his way out

THE HEAD of one of government's most important revenue agencies is on his way out the door due to sharp disagreements over targets set for him by his boss. According to our source, this government head has complained that the targets are "impossible" to meet, given the prevailing economic environment in the country (a line used often by his predecessors even during good times).

This source added that there is simply no way of meeting certain targets imposed arbitrarily by economic managers at a time when the level of business activity in certain industries had fallen to dramatic lows. No way that is, unless one is willing to take on the powerful and well-oiled lobby machines of certain sectors.

Because of this, perhaps, the turnover of heads of this agency is significantly higher, relatively to other revenue units.

Despite these difficulties, however, there has never been a shortage of applicants who want to head this agency... a fact that will not change when the time comes to ushers a replacement.

The good news for the boss of this agency is that he will have one less down in his side to worry about. The bad news is that it is highly unlikely that he will get to choose the replacement, as appointments to important posts in his department are often decided by Malacañang and by political allies. Dumlao L. Lacsa

Merrill ...

From page B1

Taiwan (-5.3 percent) and Korea (-1.0 percent).

Aside from the Philippines, other countries expected by Merrill Lynch to post growth this year are China (8 percent), India (5.1 percent) and Indonesia (5.6 percent).

In its report, Merrill Lynch made a list of positive and negative surprises in first quarter gross domestic product (GDP) growth among monitored Asian economies. The Philippines' dismal 0.4-percent year-on-year GDP growth was counted among the negative surprises versus an expected expansion of 2.4 percent.

India, Indonesia and Korea were cited as the only ones which grew faster than expected in the first three months, while China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand likewise fell below expectations.

"Admittedly downgrading...the size that has still not do what the US does—didn't occur as expected. But it's hard to understand the numbers without reference to it. No country saw drop in the 2.6-percent year-on-year contraction suffered by the US. Asia either did much better or much worse," the report said.

But despite the first quarter's disappointing GDP data, Merrill Lynch said it was optimistic about the next few quarters—a view it has held for some time. The report said the next three quarters would mark the upward leg of a "pu yu" recovery as "China's economic policies gain traction, global inventories are rebuilt, and exports recover from their heart attack."

"The last point is key for the second half of the year. China—the leader of the recovery to date—currently does much for the rest of Asia [and] the world. The mid-way register (US, Europe and Japan) demand to stabilize. We are optimistic that this will occur," it said.

"Global investment cycle will rebuilt, and consumer or business spending that was postponed over the last two quarters will be structured as financing conditions ease. What goes down must come back up [do ya yo]. As this happens, the small countries that have experienced the deepest contractions could surf past the deepest rebounds," it explained.

PLDT GETS CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AWARD

PLDT and Smart president and CEO Napoleon L. Nazareno (left) receives the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) Gold Award in corporate governance for the 2008 Corporate Governance Scorecard Project. PLDT has been consistently part of the top companies in the Corporate Governance Scorecard since it was first implemented by the ICD four years ago. The ICD works for the promotion of good corporate governance among the country's business organizations.

ONE OF THE BEST SELLING PAPER SHREDDERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

BSP doubts gov't spending report

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has doubted the accuracy of the latest expenditure report by the national government, hinting that if this were true, the robust growth in public spending should have helped the economy grow faster than it actually did in the first quarter.

According to the Department of Finance, the government's spent P983.7 billion in the first three months of the year, 15.5 percent higher than the P851.3 billion in the same period last year.

But some economists were caught by surprise by the recent announcement that the economy slumped by 0.4 percent in the first quarter, the first time in nine years that the GDP that the government was posting double-digit growth in spending in the past four months.

"Was the 16-percent increase in disbursements for January-April 2010 over year ago levels really translated into actual spending?" a top-ranked BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo asked.

He said the public expenditure report should be verified.

"We need to look into the composition of the national government is indeed verily whether the disbursements from BBM [Department of Budget and Management] were actually received and spent by local governments and other government line agencies," Guinigundo added.

He added that while the national government had been barging ahead its pump-priming plan, the implementation of some targeted infrastructure projects remains to be seen.

"The national government has made representations that there have been projects which are ready to go [meaning, up for implementation], should really as to speak. Did we really spend on those projects as originally scheduled and programmed?" Guinigundo said.

Guinigundo agreed that the government should not spend carelessly but he insisted that it should fulfill its goal of pump-priming the economy by maintaining the 2009 budget and properly spend on targeted projects.

The 0.4-percent GDP growth in the first quarter, the lowest in a decade, has raised fears that the Philippines would go the way of its neighboring countries and plunge into recession this year.

By definition widely used around the world, recession is two consecutive quarters of year-on-year drop in GDP. GDP is the value of all the goods produced and services rendered within the economy in a given period.

The anemic growth in the first quarter was despite moves of the BSP to bring down interest rates.

Since December, the BSP has already reduced its key policy rate by a total of 175 basis points. The overnight borrowing and lending rates of the BSP were raised at 4.25 and 6.25 percent, respectively.

The lower overnight borrowing rate is intended to encourage banks to lend more of their funds instead of depositing them at the BSP. The decrease in the overnight lending rate is aimed at influencing banks to cut the interest rates they charge their customers. Michelle V. Rerra

Pharmaceutical sales to hit ₱123B in 2009

By Abigail L. Ho

SALES OF PHARMACEUTICAL products in the country are expected to hit as much as ₱123 billion this year, 5.6 percent better than last year's ₱116 billion.

"The global economic crisis, the recession research and development ... pressure, and the expiring patents are some of the reasons we have this growth projection this year," Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines executive director Lester Ildefonso Gloor said in a statement.

Last year, the pharmaceutical sector here grew by more than 20 percent.

According to the group, which is composed of more than 50 local and multinational firms, the industry would be even more viable with proper support from the government.

Gloor echoed that in a recent meeting with President Aquino, the group's more concerted support for the industry via the strict implementation of policies that would protect pharmaceutical firms' intellectual property.

He related that a look billions of dollars and years of research to come out with life-saving medicines, including those for lifethreatening diseases such as the Buerna-ACEN11.

Last year alone, he said biopharmaceutical companies spent a record $65.1 billion for research and development.

It also takes around 15 years of thorough research just to get regulatory approval for a new drug, he added.

EDC sells Bonifacio lot to PNOC for ₱1.02B

By Amy R. Remo

LOPEZ LED ENERGY DEVELOPMENT Corp. yesterday said it completed last Monday the sale of a portion of its land to state-owned Philippine National Oil Co. for P1.02 billion.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, EDC investor relations manager Emelin G. Recio said the sale covered some 15,750 square meters of land located in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City where EDC's headquarters is located.

Recio said the sale was in accordance with an EDC board resolution dated Nov. 13, 2007, and was publicly disclosed as part of the re-Footnotes memorandum for both the initial public offering and the follow-on offering last December 2006 and July 2007, respectively.

Clears books of 12-B yen loan

EDC's sale to PNOC for the remaining portion of the land is to be completed with the signing of the deed of exchange among EDC, the Department of Energy and the Bases Conversion Development Authority covering a land swap arrangement.

"Management expects to conclude the transaction within 2009," Recio said.

In a separate disclosure, EDC said it has completely settled a 12-billion yen loan as of June 1, giving the company a net gain of P39 million from hedging arrangements.

Recio said that at the time of the Japanese loan's maturity, EDC's currency exposure was covered by a number of hedging arrangements.

"The company intends to hedge its currency exposure on its remaining yen obligations. Highlights of the various hedging arrangements to be entered into will be disclosed to the PSEI as soon as they are firmed up," said EDC president and CEO Ned A. Aquino.

EDC senior manager Arlette A. Tinio said the company plans to begin the hedging of its remaining 22-billion yen loan within the year after it secured an approval from its board last March.

Gentre said the company was evaluating the possible hedging structures for the loan and would pursue hedging depending on the assessment of the yen against the dollar.

"We are already submitting proposals from banks for the hedging," Gentre said.

SPC Power eyes wind, hydro projects

SPC POWER CORP IS PLANNING TO put up in the Visayas a wind farm and a hydro power facility with capacities of less than 100 megawatts each, according to a company official.

SPC Power executive director Alberto Fenix Jr. said the company was venturing into renewable energy projects to broaden expand its energy portfolio.

Fenix explained that the company was likely to go for projects with less than 100 MW to capacity since these would involve less requirements and construction work and, consequently, smaller investments.

He declined to disclose investment figures, saying the numbers were still being studied on a site-specific basis.

A rule of thumb is that for every MW of hydropower produced, at least $1.5 million in investments are needed. For wind power, a company needs to invest at least $1 million per MW, and for solar energy, $6 million per MW.

This means that SPC Power may have to invest no more than $300 million for its planned wind farm and less than $250 million for its hydropower facility.

Fenix added that they were looking at off-grid renewable energy projects in certain sites but "we're a little disposed toward Visayas area because that's where we are."

Should the company proceed with its proposed renewable energy projects, Fenix said the company has a harnessing capacity of P7 billion since it did not have any debt right now.

Meanwhile, Fenix said the company was interested in the 600-megawatt Cebu coal-fired power plant in Barangay Toledo and the 620-MW Limay combined cycle power plant in Bataan.

"We're looking at that, we're working with possible partners," he said.

He explained that the Limay plant in particular was also a gas turbine where SPC has an experience since it operates two gas turbines in Cebu with a capacity of 27.5 MW each.

Fenix added that the company sets also looking at all the other power facilities owned by National Power Corp.

Amy R. Remo

Stocks close higher

SHARE PRICES closed 1.29 percent higher yesterday, fueled by Wall Street's rally overnight and positive news from the United States, dealers said.

The composite index rose 21.77 points to 1,698.42 points, while the all-shares index rose 0.88 percent to 1,112.59 points.

There were 81 gainers, 39 losers and 39 unchanged.

Turnover amounted to 4.38 billion shares worth P3.7 billion.

The local currency traded at 47.117 to the dollar yesterday morning from 47.08 at the close of trading on the previous day.

"The optimism is increasing, primarily from the United States, driven by the manufacturing numbers that came out overnight," said Jose Vicente Of AB Capital Securities Inc.

"The market still remembers that the rest of the problems is in the US and once the US shows signs of a recovery, that bodes a lot of confidence in our own market," he said.

He forecast that "the market will continue to go up. There is a lot of liquidity. We could argue that the market is already overbought but so far there hasn't been any signs of weakness yet."

Globe Telecom rose 2.27 percent to P965, while Energy Development Corp. gained 2.7 percent to P3.80.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. added 0.69 percent to P1,345, while Filinvest Land Inc. climbed 3.39 percent to 81 centavos. AFP

RP fastest growing bond issuer in Q1

By Michelle V. Rerra

THE PHILIPPINES POSTED THE FASTEST growth in the amount of bonds issued in the first quarter among neighboring countries in Asia, as both the government and corporate sectors became more aggressive in tapping the capital markets to fund higher expenditure requirements.

"In the first quarter [the room rapid increase in issuance came out of the Philippines," ADB said in its latest issue of the Asian Bond Monitor.

ADB data showed that a total of P431.16 billion worth of bonds were sold by both government and the private sector in the first quarter, almost double than issued in the same period last year.

Of the bonds sold, P290 billion were issued by the government, while the other P13 billion was issued by the private sector.

Government-issued bonds in the first quarter went up 92.4 percent from a year ago, while the long-term debt instruments sold by the private sector were higher by 191 percent.

Other Asian countries that posted substantial increases in bond issues include Hong Kong, which recorded a 93.1-percent increase to HK$962.

South Korea posted a 86.4-percent increase, Thailand 36.7 percent, and Singapore 11.2 percent.

The government is expecting a much higher budget deficit this year, which may see it needed to borrow more in the form of bonds.

Under the latest fiscal program of the government for 2009, the government expects to post a budget deficit of P399.2 billion, up from last year's P68.1 billion.

The Department of Finance, however, said the deficit ceiling for the year would be increased further because of the need to further prime up the economy given the global turmoil.

In the first quarter, the growth in the economy slowed to just 0.1 percent, the slowest in a decade.

This raised concerns that the economy would finally plunge into recession this year and join its neighboring countries that have already reported contractions in the first quarter.

The measly growth was blamed partly on the drop in exports, which were hit by the anemic global demand.

The United States and Europe, which drive the global economic crunch, are two of the Philippines' biggest export markets.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, however, said the Philippines would not slide into a recession.

They said the government would spend more in the months ahead on infrastructure and social services, while the central bank said it was willing to cut interest rates further if needed.

Gov't, private firms issue combined ₱331B, ADB says

sold by the private sector were higher by 191 percent.

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The Department of Finance, however,

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Gov't tax effort down to 11.5%, DOF says

By Reena/W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT'S TAX EFFORT FELL by 1.4 percentage points to 11.5 percent in the first quarter as the gross domestic product (GDP) grew by a slim 0.4 percent, data from the Department of Finance show.

With this, finance officials reiterated calls for Congress to pass new tax measures that would help raise additional revenues.

Tax effort refers to the ratio of tax collection to GDP or the total value of goods and service produced and paid for within an economic territory in a given period.

In money terms, tax collection in the first three months narrowed up at 11.3 percent of GDP in that period, which the National Statistical Coordination Board valued at P1.74 trillion at current prices.

In the same period in 2008, total tax collection was 12.9 percent of GDP, which then amounted to P1.86 trillion.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue's collection amounted for 8.9 percent of GDP down from the 9.9 percent it achieved in the first quarter of last year.

Also, the Bureau of Customs turned in an equivalent of 3.5 percent of GDP, lower than the 3.9 percent it posted in the comparative period.

Finance Undersecretary Gil S. Beltran explained that the first three months were not high revenue months unlike the second quarter.

"These are quiet months and, especially where taxes are difficult, taxpayers tend to pay less to save their money," Beltran said.

"We hope our tax collection would be heavier so that it would not be left behind by GDP growth," he said. "Tax administration's measures would be intensified and we will push the BIR and the BOC to do more."

The official added that the DOF believes that enhanced efforts in Congress to bolster the government's revenues at a time of economic downturn.

GDP growth from January to March was the slowest recorded in the past 10 years, NSCB data show.

Low GDP growth translates to lower government revenues which, in turn, means that it may need to borrow more to support its spending program.

In the first quarter, the revenue effort or the revenue-to-GDP ratio was pegged at 12.8 percent, down from 15.1 percent in the same period of 2008.

Total revenues reached P233.4 billion, which fell short of the target of P321.8 billion as well as the program estimate of P283.5 billion.

For 2009, the DOF hopes to raise the tax effort to 14.3 percent from the 14.1 percent achieved in 2008.

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RP fills US quota for refined sugar

By Nina T. Dizhoandro

THE PHILIPPINES HAS FILLED its quota of 137,362 metric tons (MT) in sugar exports to the United States and is poised to ship 100,000 MT to the world market for crop year 2008/2009, according to the Philippine Sugar Millers Association (Philsuc).

"We already completed [US] shipments by March 2009," PSMA president Archimedes Antonio said in an interview.

Exports to the world market, meanwhile, are currently at 50,000 MT. These go to Japan and Indonesia for the most part, Antonio said.

By the end of 2009, he said, the total shipments of the investor to the world market may very well reach 100,000 MT.

Antonio said there was enough supply to the Philippines to cope with the demand, even though producers was declining due to high input costs.

For the 2008/2009 crop year ending Aug. 31, the Philippines' sugar production is forecast to reach 2.65 million MT, about 16 percent of production to considered export grade.

The industry earlier predicted 2.5 million MT of output, but lowered it to 2.33 million MT and then to 2.197 million MT before settling at this current estimate.

This is a big dip from the 2007/2008 output of 2.495 million MT, a 25-year record high.

The lower forecast was prompted by lower sugarcane yield due to rainy weather since the start of the crop year, combined with high fertilizer prices (which resulted in less fertilizer use).

The two factors resulted in higher cost of production, making it harder for farmers to produce more sugarcane.

Because of the vulnerability of the local sugar to world market prices, the industry is seeking the reclassification of Philippine sugar as from sensitive to highly sensitive list within the Asean Free Trade Agreement.

Without this reclassification, the country's sugar tariff would drop to 20 percent this year from 30 percent last year, down by exposing the industry to more import threats.

Tariff could further go down to zero in the percent by 2010.

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Extelcom hits tax on text

By Doris C. Dumlao

EXPRESS TELECOMmunications Co. (Extelcom) has joined the growing list of telecommunications firms opposing a government proposal to slap a price cap on SMS or text messaging services and a regulatory fee on all telecommunication transactions.

In a position paper, Extelcom urged the National Telecommunications Commission to reject the Congressional Oversight Committee's proposal to slap a P0.08 regulatory fee and set a P0.50 price ceiling for each SMS.

Extelcom said its opposition was based on the "inconsistent finality" of the proposals. It also urged that further study was needed to determine the viability of the proposed measures.

Extelcom said that the effects of the proposed regulatory fee and price-fixing on SMS charges would ramrod the economic benefits that the lowering of access charges may provide.

"This includes, in particular, weakening market competition, discouraging new players from entering the market and in the same time becoming a serious disincentive to existing telecommunications companies," Extelcom said.

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Editor Cesar D. Hangarang

New Civic retains excellent features

THE NEW Civic was initially unveiled at the recent Shanghai Motor Show.

Text and photos by Charles E. Bolton

THE HONDA CIVIC nameplate is always synonymous with high-performance cars at half the cost both in terms of price and of daily maintenance.

Since its introduction in the early '70s the Civic has evolved from a 1.1-liter, 50-horsepower sedan to today's four- and fifth-seat hatchback machine.

The eighth generation Civic that debuted last week at the Subic International Raceway was indeed a huge leap from its earlier predecessors but not so much from the one it immediately replaced.

Forward looking

Considering that the current Civic's design is still one of the most forward-looking as well as easily recognizable, Honda decided not to mess too much and retained that car's short hood and dramatically raked windshield.

While changes are minor, they are indeed most welcome. There are a redesigned bumper that now incorporates three air intakes, a slightly restyled grille and a new headlight cluster combination. (The 2.0-liter variant gets a standard HID headlights and 17-inch multispoke alloy wheels).

Together these give the new Civic's front end a slightly bolder look, while restyled taillights now feature clear lens sections and amber bulbs.

Inside, the new Civic now carries the paddle shift technology (in the automatic variant), a feature previously available in the 2-liter exiMotion variant.

The new Civic released in 1.8 VTEC, Euro 4 compliant engine, with the 1.8-liter variant generating i-shift-leading 140 horsepower while the 2-liter variant is capable of generating 153 hp.

"These should enable the new Civic to continue its refined driving experience that gives out a dose of sportiness. Such efficient powertrains should also give its drivers ton of kilometers for each liter of gasoline," described Hiroshi Shimizu, president and GM of Honda Cars Philippines Inc.

Upgraded entertainment system

Passengers of the new Civic will definitely enjoy the car's upgraded entertainment system that now has USB audio interface for direct connection to digital audio players and other USB devices that contain MP3, WMA or AAC music files.

"From the moment the Civic was created in 1972, the Civic has become a successful global car that embodies Honda's challenging spirit. The eight generations of the Civic are reflective of how it has shaped the motoring industry here and abroad," Shimizu said.

To be offered are the manual V and S variants (priced at P958,000 and P908,000, respectively). The automatic S V and S variants (P998,000 and P948,000), and the automatic 2.0-liter variant (P1.1 million).

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THE COCKPIT

The '09 Isuzu Alterra: 4 reasons

BY THE PHILIPPINE AUTOMOBILE TRADE affinity replaced the Trooper as the flagship vehicle and SUV of Isuzu starting in 2008. Based on the global D-Max pickup truck due to expected from Isuzu's Thailand hub to 23 European countries and South Africa, (139,000 units exported as of end-2007), the affinity is powered by the same 3.0-liter RED common-rail direct injection turbodiesel engine in the D-Max).

In five shown units, this is the Euro 3 common rail direct injection turbodiesel engine with 94 PS (308 engine packing 146 or more power and 294 Newton-meters of torque that took 10 motoring journalists (89 kilometers from Isuzu Laguna to Tagaytay City, Batangas and back) on one full CW (over) tank of 65 liters that also enthused refueling. The three-day drive toward staying road conditions and included boarding Forbs (Subic), Bell-off) home to close the set from Lanson to Nuevo to Manilanos.

Selling points

However, the Alterra's steel and tested fuel economy is only one of its strong selling points. The others are, not necessarily in order of importance, as suggested formal Price (SRP), entertainment system and all-around reliability.

The Alterra's SRP ranging from P1,630,000 for the 4x2 manual to P1,720,000 for the range while pool fuel economy is much lower than competitors in the full-size SUV class whose SRPs start at P2,555,000 and reach as high as P4,186,000.

The competition in this SUV segment now have more sophisticated, state-of-the-art suspension systems, but having experienced riding in the second row seats of the Alterra from Manila to Subic and back one day, I can say that the ride is quite comfy despite the hard chassis.

Flex ride

A stiff but as independent front suspension and leaf spring rigid rear axle, 2nd waterbone frame suspension have provided the vehicle an excellent ride-to-ride ratio. And, as an economy like its rivals, the Alterra does a comparatively spacious cabin with plenty of legroom and headroom plus additional air-con vents and controls at the rear.

Aside from the 160 HP and appropriately sized 4-cylinder 4JK1 diesel engine, the 3.1 surround audio-video entertainment system, the only full-size SUV is equipped. The DVD has high-resolution 7-inch LCD monitors mounted on the backs of the front headrests that will keep rear seat passengers, especially children, entertained during long trips while iPod addicts can plug into the U.S Dolby surround sound system.

Aside from an integrated entertainment system, the '09 Alterra has a helpful reverse steering system that captures images from a rear-view camera installed into the rear spoiler and feeds them to the dashboard mounted LCD monitor, making it easier for the driver to back up into a tight parking slot.

The exterior has been spruced up with chrome on the door handles and power-folding side mirrors plus a new ground tailpipe finisher, but essentially the Alterra looks the same. There are also newly designed 16-inch six-spoke alloy wheels.

Power

Driving the Alterra on the highway, I found that it was powerful enough to smoothly keep pace with passenger sedans. The high-clearance of the Alterra and its 4-drive platform enables it to tackle challenging off-road terrain when occasion, whatever the weather conditions.

Summing up, the Alterra may not be as imposingly macho as the Mitsubishi Pajero, the Ford Expedition or Nissan Patrol, but neither is it as pokey as they are. Moreover, its fuel economy is one of the best points and its automatic system makes it ideal for family use on long trips. And being an Isuzu, its strength, durability, versatility and reliability can stand to be questioned.

TODAY'S HOMER STICKER: Its not just a question mark where God put a pencil.

LTO Director Impressed by New Insurance Scheme

Land Transportation Office Director Arturo Lomibao expressed amazement at the new payout scheme of Monarch Insurance's VIP On-The-Spot auto insurance program. Under the policy, clients are paid on the spot for any car accident they get into.

"It is very ingenious and saves the motorists a lot of time and effort. But the real good news for us is that it solves one of the biggest problem of Metro Manila traffic...those small accidents that causes terrible traffic jams because they obstruct the flow of traffic," says Lomibao.

The Monarch VIP On-The-Spot insurance policy is formulated in such a way that all a client need to do when they get into an accident is to call a 24/7 hotline and an assessor will be with them in 30-minutes.

From there, the Monarch personnel will assess their damage and if the client agrees to the damage estimate, then they are given a check to cover the repair of the damage. For security reason, amounts of P20,000 and below a check is handed over on the spot to the policy holder. For bigger amounts, a voucher is given to the policy holder and they can get the check at the Monarch office or the casher dog.

Monarch clients who have been given this service have expressed satisfaction over the new product and say it is a big help to them in times of distress like road accidents. Monarch Insurance is located at the 15th floor of the Citibank Towers along Salcedo Avenue, Legaspi Village in Makati.

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Formula One teams submit entries for 2010 championships

GENEVA—FERRARI AND ALL other teams from the Formula One Teams Association (Fota) on Friday submitted conditional entries for the 2010 Formula One championship.

McLaren, BMW Sauber, Toyota, Renault, Red Bull Racing, Toro Rosso and Force GP all signed up with Fota's seemingly bringing in real to the heated row with the sport's rulers over the president Max Mosley's intention to introduce a voluntary 40 million-pound budget cap from 2010.

But Mosley's Wednesday deadline looks with Fota to announce their entry before Friday's deadline.

Conditional entries

"All Fota teams have today (Friday) submitted conditional entries for the 2010 FIA Formula One World Championship," the body said in a statement.

Fota confirmed all its members' long-term commitment to be involved in the FIA Formula One World Championship." It added that it had "unanimously agreed further and significant actions to substantially reduce the costs of competing in the championship in the next three years, creating a mechanism that will preserve the technological competition and the sporting challenge and, at the same time, facilitate the entry in the F1 championship for new teams.

"These measures are in line with what has been already decided in 2009 within Fota, achieving important saving in engines and gearboxes," Fota's statement added.

Both sides met on the sidelines of last weekend's Monaco Grand Prix with Mosley afterward suggesting a compromise was in the air.

Fota continued that entry for the 2010 championship was on the basis that "the Concorde Agreement is signed by all parties before June 11, 2009, after which All Fota teams will commit to competing in Formula One until 2012." "The renewal of the Concorde Agreement will provide security for the future of the sport by binding all parties in a formal relationship that will ensure stability on sound governance," it added.

Proposals

"All Fota teams' entries have been submitted today on the understanding that all Fota teams will be permitted to compete during the 2010 Formula One season on identical regulatory basis and that they may only be accepted as a whole."

AFP

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Contributing Editor Lia S. Bernardo

LIFESTYLE Parenting

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YHAZE, Raya, Marco and Gino do the cook-race with their mom, Donna Pangilinan Simpao, as part of their P.E.

Why this family dares to do homeschooling

Does it have negative effects on a child's social skills? Not true, says this mom

By Rowena C. Borgos

LIKE ANY PARENT, Donna Pangilinan Simpao has always wanted quality education for and quality time with her children Yhaze, 10; Marco, 8; Raya, 6; and Gino, 4.

So when Simpao's sister, Felichi, explained how her family benefited from her kids' homeschooling, Simpao immediately looked for schools that offered it.

A learning lifestyle, homeschooling is essentially bringing school activities outside of a classroom and into one's home and daily life, Simpao says.

"The approach has instilled in each of us the value and habit of taking our time—time for reading on the couch, time for play and inspiring families," she says. "The home setting helps, too. It affords many opportunities for relaxed and easy discussions with each of our children about such things as the importance of balance, the need to respect our studies, the joy to be had in learning, and the importance of always growing in mind, body, spirit and soul."

Bonding time

Families today tend to be involved in so many endeavors that they can be left with no time for the values-rich and unplanned experiences that allow them to grow together.

With homeschooling, Simpao adds, one can spend more time bonding with the children, influencing and shaping their values, and allowing them to pursue their latest interests, much, can and the like.

Three moms dress their kids for the new school year

ON RUBY: dress from Helmut Lang, shoes from Puma, accessories from Liz Claiborne and model's own. On Ralph: printed tee from Crooked Masters and jeans from Local Army

Ruby Gan with son Ralphel

Accounting professors—UP Diliman Creative Writing
UP Audio Society Dean, Age: 18

Who chooses your son's outfits—you or him?

Naturally I let my son choose his own clothes. When he has more than one choice, I help him narrow them down. Like, for instance, he was eyeing skinny jeans and denim tapered fitness, one skinny black and another skinny cobalt. I naturally chose the cobalt because it is the color of the moment. The loose linen pants and the black dress are staples, as they will always be there.

What style factors do you consider when choosing clothes for him?

Comfort and wearability are tops. Design and durability come in close second. If it is comfortable with my son, then that's a go.

Do you follow a budget when shopping for your son's clothes?

We do not buy a lot of items because my mom buy him (and his brother) a lot of shirts and shoes whenever they shop here and abroad. But if we do, we buy things that are reasonably priced.

What does he wear for relaxed weekends and the rainy season?

For relaxed weekends, he'd go for ordinary shirt, shorts or pants, shoes or flip-flops for rainy season, waterproof jacket, shoes...ordinary shirt, pants.

What are his usual commentaries or concerns when it comes to buying clothes?

He often asks if he can pair something with other clothes, or what other colors match go with.

How do you teach your kid good grooming, discipline and a sense of style?

I tell him that discipline is type Bureau, sweet cologne and deodorant. Nails should also be trimmed.

Margs Lopez with son Mio and daughter Taty

Ages: Mio 4, Taty 2

What percentage would you say your kids have in terms of deciding their own look?

For Mio, I would say 50 percent. For Taty I say 80 percent. Most of the time she knows what she wants and sometimes he reasoned to some something else once she's decided.

What style factors do you consider when choosing clothes for them?

Design is No. 1, but I don't believe in eco-trendy pieces. I prefer basic classic timeless, so they can be worn again and again. Now is comfort and wearability, last is durability.

Do you follow a budget when shopping for your kids' clothes?

Not always so. I have a certain range in mind for certain categories of their wardrobe. It's not a big budget to begin with.

What items do your kids wear for relaxed weekends and the rainy season?

For Mio, linen shorts paired with a sleeveless tee with sandals. For Taty, skinny sundresses with sandals. For the rainy season, not very different from what they usually wear since it gets very humid. But then we like to match their outfits with boots when it rains.

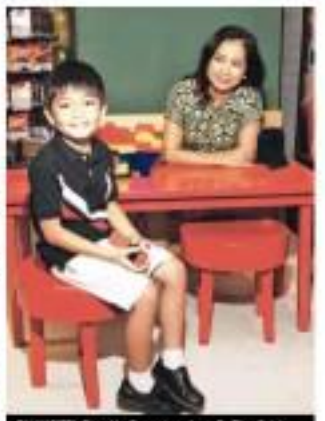
What are their usual commentaries or concerns when it comes to buying clothes?

Fortunately, I have not heard any complaints from Mio. With Taty she dislikes the colors brown and black. Mio already communicates as well as he is able to say what he prefers and likes to wear. With Taty I can tell it's her favorite when she says "it's the same as mommy's."

How do you teach your kids good grooming, discipline and a sense of style?

I believe that sense of style is inherent—it cannot be taught or imposed. We don't impose but rather encourage them to dress up according to what makes them feel comfortable and good about themselves.

ON HANDS: dress from Sinsquarone and shoes from Mia. On Taty: top and bottom from Kiddos. On Mio: top from Disfemfatale; Matthew Williamson collection and bottom from Kiddos



ON HANDS: Diane Von Furstenberg dress. On Dion: Ralph Lauren Kids polo and shorts

Marital Nievera with son Dion and daughter Frances

ON HANDS: FCUK dress, leather bag. Boots Kayak and G-Girls wedges

Frances—Sophomore in HS
Age: 16

Dion—Prep in dentist
Age: 8

Who decides on the clothes of your son and daughter?

For Dion, I decide since he is only 8 years old, while Frances, being a teenager, is allowed to choose her own style.

What style factors do you consider when choosing clothes for them?

Comfort, wearability, durability and design.

Do you follow a budget when shopping for their clothes?

Yes, and it gets smaller this year due to recession.

What items do your kids wear for relaxed weekends and the rainy season?

Comfortable and light-colored clothes.

What are their usual commentaries or concerns when it comes to buying clothes?

For Frances, she always reminds me that her style is different from my own style. For Dion, since he is only 8 years old, he prefers clothes with printed superheroes.

How do you teach your kids good grooming, discipline and a sense of style?

I instill in them the value of cleanliness all over, being well-mannered in front of people, how to dress up properly and how to carry themselves.

Are you raising a pervert?

ROOTS AND WINGS

Cathy Rebuco-Gutbelle

A parent's paranoia amid all that sex and videotape

ALL THE SEX, LIES AND VIDEOtapes hogging the news was enough to get parents like me paranoid about the values or attitudes we teach our children about bodily sexuality.

But how does one prevent a child from becoming a pervert, and how does one prevent a child from being victimized by perverts?

Although there is no fool-proof way, I guess it all begins with education, at the right time and the right place, and discussing these issues in the context of love, marriage and respect for one's body and the opposite sex.

Discussions such as these best take place before a teen or thereabouts, or entering puberty. I remember reading a book during my house help's confiding early teenage years called "Why Am I So Miserable If These Are The Best Years of My Life?" by Andrea Boroff Eagan. It was the classic on puberty in the '80s and a survival handbook for young girls like me back then.

Quick survey

Today, there are countless books and websites to help parents discuss puberty and sexuality with their adolescents. I did a quick survey over the weekend among parents and a group of 17- and 18-year-old men and women. Some of the important points I discovered:

1. Many mothers (and fathers) from upper- and middle-class families remain ill-equipped or ill-at-ease to discuss sexuality with their children. Some progressive mothers and fathers take the lead in discussing boy-girl relationships, physical and emotional changes, in a natural manner which the children seemed to appreciate.

2. Most of the young people I surveyed (seven out of 10) prefer discussions on "sex and all that" with their parents, but suggested that for the talks to be smooth, "Parents must have a close relationship with the child before talking about these topics, otherwise it will be very awkward." The young men and women also prefer that parents be open to their questions and not be judgmental. It's also important to them that the discussion be in private, out of earshot of younger siblings.

3. Reminders such as a pet dog or cat giving birth, hearing a single mother or father, watching a movie together where relationship issues are tackled, or even the latest on the Kho Belo-Halili scandal can provide learning moments. The other night, while my husband, 10-year-old daughter and I were discussing the prospect of Hayden Kho losing his medical license, our 15-year-old cat to, "Are you supposed to be discussing this in front of me?" We all laughed and told him that yes, he was old enough to hear what we had to say about the issues. Of course, we left out the gory details.

Reading supplements

4. Conversations about puberty and sex are best supplemented by books—"The Care and Keeping of You...The Body Book for Girls" and "The Periods Book—The Care and Keeping of Your Emotional Life" by Andrea Boroff Eagan, published by the American Girl Library. "The Pink Locker Society" (https://pinklockersociety.org/) is a new novel and website for tween girls that provides puberty information within a fictional storyline and plot. With Locker, part of the overdone children's website www.kidshealth.org, was recently launched to help young girls understand their bodies and emotions better. The same website has a wealth of information, written both for children and parents.

For young boys, one of the best books available is "Where Did I Come From?" by Peter Mayle (yes, the famous Peter Mayle). It is a book that can be read even by a nine-year-old. Maple has a gift for translating adult experiences into concepts a child can understand. You must be open-minded though and ready to answer your son or daughter's questions about some topics in the book.

5. Sharing stories about puberty is better appreciated by girls than boys. The girls I surveyed said that as long as their mothers were comfortable, they loved hearing stories about how they were at that age. The boys feel those stories from their parents "weird." They don't really appreciate details because they might feel embarrassed for their parents.

Many parents are unfortunately still of the mind-set that "if you don't talk about it, it won't happen." Look at your own attitudes and sexuality and be candid about what you say and do, because these send signals to your children. Role-modeling and setting limits are important when discussing issues such as puberty, sex, love and marriage. Your family's standards and values system must be reinforced time to time.

Respect for one's body, knowing risky behavior and avoiding it are values that must be firmly set in his or her psyche.

E-mail the author at cathybuhuan@gmail.com

Cool kiddie books and school stuff

FANTASTIC INTERNATIONAL INC., ESTABLISHED in the country almost nine years ago, is behind the Cool Kids and the Fluffy Friends brands.

Colorful and lovely characters make up the brand, and kids can read about them in two exciting books: "The Adventures of Coco and Kenny" and "The Adventures of Coco and Kenny during Christmas."

These colorful and glossy children's books are given free with every purchase of Cool Kids products bought from any participating department store nationwide.

The new line of school bags and shoes showcases the latest characters of the Cool Kids friends: Royal Princess, Glam Girls, Forest Fairies, Virtual Wonderwear, Rock (Gendos), Ice (Arendos) and White (Aquidos) robots, and Space Rangers.

The year-end product of the Cool Kids line comes with environment messages kids can learn from.

Fantastic International Inc. is working with the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines.

For every purchase of any item from the Cool Kids product line, Fantastic International Inc. will donate part of the proceeds to WWF-Philippines. Visit www.fantasticworld.com and www.coolkids.com.ph.

Why this family dares to do . . .

from page 01

"In a homeschooling convention I attended with 600 families, most of them mentioned the benefits of character-building, instilling values and being ahead in academics when they enroll in traditional schools. Besides, a homeschool curriculum is cheaper than that of a traditional school," she says.

Modules or lessons materials are provided by the school. But one can also use supplementary materials as long as they're approved by the school.

"The subjects are similar to those in traditional schools," says Sinapan. "But you can provide an education customized specifically for your child, as you know your child best. It's not memorizing or rote learning. And you can monitor his or her weaknesses and strengths."

Sinapan's husband, Gilbert, teaches Bible Comprehension, Physical Education and History to their four kids on weekends or every time he comes home early. Donna takes care of the other subjects. Her Filipino, they hire a tutor.

Monday to Friday, Sinapan and her children start their lessons at 8 a.m. then have recess and lunch break. By 05., they have Badminton, Tennis and Swimming. They even wear uniforms, although it's not required.

To help the kids better understand their lessons, the family goes on out-of-town education trips or mall-crawls on weekends.

Accredited by DepEd

The Department of Education (DepEd) accredits only homeschool providers affiliated with a school which itself is accredited, to maintain standards.

If a family homeschools independently, or homeschools in a program not accredited, the DepEd will require a validation test which the student must pass before he or she is allowed to enroll in the proper grade level.

Raya and Gino homeschool twice a week and attend a three-day preschool program at The Bridge School, while Vince and Marie are enrolled at The Master's Academy.

"I love the support of The Bridge for my youngest children. It gives me the time and energy to focus on their older siblings," says Sinapan.

At The Master's Academy, the school year begins as soon as the parents receive their curriculum. Parents have a maximum of 12 months to finish the school year.

No ideal age

There is no ideal age to start homeschooling, but the earlier, the better. The Sinapan household have been homeschooling since preschool.

Contrary to the notion that homeschooling has negative effects on a child's social skills, Sinapan says her children can socialize across age groups.

"Vince is now looking forward to joining a high school basketball team and meeting friends once he graduates from elementary."

Initially, Sinapan planned to enroll her kids in International for only a year. "But since I saw in them the passion to learn without being confined to workbooks or something rigid, I remained their homeschooling."

"As a journey, homeschooling is beautiful. It's like bringing the world to your home. Every moment is a teaching moment," she says.

DONNA and husband Gilbert with their kids Vince, Marie, Raya and Gino in Disneyland Hong Kong

GINO: "I want to be a fireman when I grow up."

DRAWING, reading and gardening are all part of homeschooling.

For inquiries on homeschooling, visit homeschool.org or call 635-5267/0917-8415808 and look for Sitti Mendoza, managing director of The Master's Academy.

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HELLO KITTY, Chummycroll, My Melody, Pompom, Little Twin Stars, Keroppi and the Sugar Bunnies are among the fanatic characters with the latest back-to-school items—backpacks, messenger bags, folders, pens and pencils, notebooks and bench kits. Hello Kitty has a plaid collection and a pink collection. They're at all Gift Gate stores. Sanrio items are exclusively distributed in the Philippines by Great Gifts Sales and Licensing Corporation.

How to childproof your home

Crawl around the home on hands and knees to get a view of things from your tyke's perspective

THE CONSUMER
Linda B. Bolido

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS are rallying behind a bill that seeks to prohibit the sale of toys and other articles intended for very young children that contain toxic substances, particularly a chemical known as phthalates.

The substances may retard growth and cause developmental disorders, hormonal disruption and, later, result in reproductive abnormalities.

The SunShare Coalition has provided members of the House Committee on the Welfare of Children documents detailing the potential risks and hazards posed by phthalates, especially to young kids who tend to put all sorts of things in their mouths.

In pushing for the approval of House Bill 5050, filed by Bayan Muna Representative Rl. Ilagan-Ocampo and the United States banned in 2008 six phthalates from children's toys and cosmetics, while the European Union prohibited in 2007 the use of phthalates in toys and other articles intended for children under the age of three.

Child safety at home

Still on the subject of child safety, many people were saddened by the death of former boxing champion Mike Tyson's four-year-old daughter, who was accidentally strangled by a cord of a treadmill.

The irony is, according to experts, the cord is meant to ensure the safety of the exercise, allowing him/her to stop immediately a machine that may be going too fast for comfort and safety.

The tragedy is an important wake-up call for parents, especially those with very young children. Many things in the home (but may seem safe to the human eye) is a child.

In an article on the online MSN Health & Fitness, presumably citing statistics in the United States, says "Home injuries are one of the top reasons kids under age three visit the ER (emergency room), and nearly 70 percent of the children who die from unintentional injuries at home are four years old and under."

The article says even older children are not completely safe as it cites statistics showing that "unintentional injury is the leading cause of death in kids 14 years old and under, with more than a third of these injuries happening at home. Young kids have the highest risk of being injured at home because that's where they spend most of their time."

The MSN article suggests some ways to childproof a home to minimize, if not completely avoid, accidents.

"To realize the potential risks to a young child, it once adults should crawl around the home on hands and knees to get a view of things from the little one's perspective.

The article identifies common causes of home injury and/or deaths as fire and burns, suffocation, drowning, choking, falls, poisoning and firearms.

Quoting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it says most home accidents happen where there is water (bathroom, kitchen, swimming pools, hot tubs), heat or flames (kitchen, barbecue grill, burning areas), toxic substances (under the sink, medicine cabinet and other places where pharmaceuticals are stored including purses, tool sheds, garages), and potential for a fall (stairs, slippery floors, high chairs and windows).

It is a good idea for parents to learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and age-appropriate Heimlich maneuvers for help a person who is choking because of something stuck in his/her throat).

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5008 Chino Roces Ave. cor. Makati- and Ayala Sts., 1204 Makati City; fax 897-4782/90; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph.

Hairloss is wrecking her life and she doesn't know why.

Thinning hair makes a woman look older. When your hair's health, shine and bounce weaken, it seems your personality is likewise affected. Self-consciousness, diminished self-esteem, even bouts of depression may occur.

Most women who have gone through this harrowing experience say they tried everything to stop hairloss, from special treatments at the salon, to a whole range of over-the-counter products. But nothing worked. Sadly, many "remedies" may have actually made the condition worse. Until they found out the reasons why they were losing hair, little could be done to end the problem.

Possible reasons for hairloss.

Women's hairloss can be caused by hormonal changes. Female Pattern Baldness (or Androgenetic Alopecia) is a reaction to male hormones in the body (androgens) which can weaken a woman's hair. Other factors can be stress, poor nutrition, illnesses and reactions to certain medications, childbirth and menopause, frequent coloring, curling, straightening, and many more. Most causes of hairloss, when they are correctly identified, can be treated with good results.

Getting the facts on why you are losing hair.

Trichology is the study of the functions and problems of hair. A trichologist is someone who has been educated in the subject and is qualified to determine the reasons why your hair is not in good health.

Where do you find a trichologist? One name that has been synonymous with Professional Trichology in the Philippines for more than 25 years: Svenson. Svenson trichologists will examine your hair and scalp and give you advice on what to do.

A trichologist - what does it cost?

Nothing. Svenson trichologists offer an in-depth Hair & Scalp analysis totally free of charge.

Pre-hairloss symptoms.

Before your hair starts falling out, be aware of early warning signs such as persistent dandruff, flaking, and scalp irritations. Dead hairless - see a trichologist when you see these signs!

These visible indications are embarrassing, and when combined with dirt in the atmosphere, shampoo chemicals or excess oiliness, they can block follicles, badly affecting hair growth.

Treatments to help your hair.

Depending on the findings of your Hair & Scalp analysis, you can decide on treatment programs including:

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SCALP CORRECTOR- eliminates dandruff, flaking and other irritations, returns scalp to normal state, prevents treatment hairloss.

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How to decorate with glass

This old art is the new choice today

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

TOUTED AS THE new art, glassware can bring elegance and life to any room when arranged properly. Whether it is clear, displaying its ability to manipulate light, or brilliant in color, suffused with interesting shapes, glass becomes a dazzling accent, aside from being functional. From goblets to centerpieces, there is a wide assortment of glassware that can give any space a distinctive style.

A popular collectible art, glassware was done at the turn of the 20th century, around the Art Nouveau era. In the Philippines, carnival glass is demanded by collectors today. Fashion-forward homeowners prefer modern artistic blown glass items.

There are glassware pieces known for their gradations of color that shift from bright red to amber, called the ahnenrot, or the coral glass which lightens from red to yellow.

Milk glass, also known as opal glass for its porcelain and lava glass, blends well with a room-inspired home. There's the etched glass on which there are designs, threaded glass which has strands of colors, and the ubiquitous crystals which are status symbols in homes.

Colored glassware enlivens simple or minimalist interiors. Stanley pieces of the '70s and the bold '80s pieces have made

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MOTHER and daughter Pia and Maxene Magalona

MOI and MMD Trisha Salvador

MANNY Jamming with Gov Gene

Manny Pacquiao is set to star in new sitcom on GMA

THE SUPER-TALENTED GMA NET work got together with industry partners Friends and MD personalities and namedropppables in an informal yet fun dinner party for the greatest pound-for-pound fighter and "Pambansang Kamao" Manny Pacquiao, no less, pulutgites, at the ex "Ivi" New World Renaissance Hotel, Makati.

Circulating and welcoming the invitees were GMA Master chairman, president and CEO Felipe L. Gozon, SVP and trailblazer chief operating officer and concurrent Gilberto R. Duavit Jr., plus other top network namedropppable executives, who were joined by Solar Entertainment chairman and CEO William Tieng and dynamic president Wilson Tieng.

The event was also graced by officers of different industry partners—Johnson & Johnson Phils., Unilever Phil. Inc., PLDT, PNB, BPM, Swanson Medicinal Philippines, Smart Communications Inc., Proctor & Gamble, Chevrolet, Goldilocks, Jollibee Food Corp. and Greenwich Pizza Corp., to name a few.

Snippets of KBK's 24/7 Special and the Pacquiao-Hatton fight dubbed "The Battle of Iron and Silver" were shown after dinner as part of the special program for the Pacman.

The happening was superbly hosted by tall, good-looking Paolo Bediones, who introduced the singer and hand-fashion-design maven of the classy, dabbings.

Highlighting this bash was the contract signing of the partnership of Manny Pacquiao with GMA Network and Solar Entertainment. Pacquiao also renewed his contract with GMA Network, which scores a starring role in a new sitcom.

Kapuso stars Rochelle Pangilinan and Jay Manalo were tasked to host Jayll entertained us. Two stars of the year Manny Pacquiao got on stage and kept the invitees at the edge of their seats when he sang a few songs, including his new single "Lahing Pinoy" with the Lito Camo Band.

Now you know why it was definitely a night to remember, pulutgites.

Fashion goes beyond borders

The chic French watch brand Lulu Castagnette is now in the Philippines. Its dynamic managing director for Asia Pacific, Paschal Fannen, spoke to us about "how this globally recognized watch brand made its fashionable entrance in the country."

"We've always thought the Philippines is a good benchmark for fashion not only in Asia but worldwide. This is because whatever becomes a hit with the Filipinos ultimately becomes a hit with the rest of the world," it seems an exercise, dabbings.

True enough, through the launch of Ishan Time in SM North Edsa, LuluCastagnette watches made a super-grand entrance in Manila. "We were very excited to introduce the LuluCastagnette watches to the Philippine market. Our watches come in unique and stylish designs that will perfectly suit the personality and style of the wearer," concluded Monsieur Fannen.

We also found out that Filipino women like basic colors with more experimental styles, but French women are more attracted to bolder color patterns that are done in classic styles.

The bottom line is, dabbings, no matter what the fashion or style preference is, both Filipino and French women would agree that fashion speaks a universal language, pulutgites.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maxence Arcache
Photos by Alex Van Hagen using YOL Prem Solutions

Powerade Team Pilipinas energized

With basketball's popularity, pulutgites, our hot topnotch ladies have found a haven in Powerade Team Pilipinas.

This new squad composed of today's most electrifying basketball stars of the country is to the Fiba Asia Qualifying Championships. It's led by a dynamic power-house coaching staff in the Yeng Guiao, Rhod Ballesteros, Marlou Celis, Kenneth Duremdes and Gee Abanilla. Now, that's kinda hard to beat, pulutgites.

Sharing the players' insights and experiences as they compete with Asia's best teams, Powerade gave sports enthusiasts a chance to hear from the team members, namely, Asmen Yap, Airi Tsukiwa, Gabe Norwind, Rashidi de Ocampo, Mick Pennisi, Sunny Thuss, Jared Dillinger, Kirby Raymundo, Jaypee Belebrand, Cyrus Baguio, Brian Reyes, Willie Miller and Arwind Santos during a "meet and greet" afternoon at the Glorietta 4 Activity Center. The venue had tons of fun and prize people gathered to see the basketball stars in person and show their support for them, dabbings.

Host BJB Velasco, renowned PBA courtside commentator, welcomed guests and called on the vice president for Public Affairs and Communications of Coca-Cola Export Corp., Ali Reyes, who proudly expressed their team coach confidence he has on the team. Then the basketball players were introduced one by one in true hardcourt fashion, followed by autograph signing. Well, dabbings, the invincible Powerade Team Pilipinas is set to defend the nation's pride, challenged to give every game their best shot and capture the true spirit of the sport, the same way the dynamic Powerade does in every outstanding athlete.

POWERADE Team Pilipinas head coach Yeng Guiao and Coca-Cola Export Corp. top executive Ali Reyes

ASSISTANT team manager Gerard Francisco, PBA commissioner Sonny Barrios, assistant coaches Kenneth Duremdes and Gee Abanilla, and PBA media bureau chief Willie Marlal

POWERADE Team Pilipinas member Aia Tuaños, Willie Miller, Arwind Santos, Kirby Raymundo and Rashidi de Ocampo

CREATIVE Jolen's power couple Janice and Gary Villanueva with Ishan Time's marketing manager Linford Yap and Global Peg Bong's Alma Buenviaje

"A HIT with the Filipinos ultimately becomes a hit with the rest of the world," said managing director for Asia Pacific Paschal Fannen.

DELIRANCE gals Diana Tan, Marianne Tai and Emma Tan

CYRUS "Baguio, Ryan "The Energizer" Reyes and Jared "The Daredevil" Dillinger

ALL SMILES for Urban Time Creative Jolen's Jay Pangandoon with Global Peg Bong's Arlene Pangs, Urban Time's operations manager Kelvin Ngo, Creative Jolen's Ria Barreto and Micky Dumantoc

URBAN Time icon winners, Miki Kato from La Salle College International, Portia Silva from the Ateneo de Manila University, Anna Monica Villaverde from Trinity University of Asia, Stephanie Tai and Rachel Rancia from UA&P

POWER runner Mick Pennisi and Gaba "The Predators" Norwood

Free newsletter tackles pet matters

"TAKING GUARDIANSHIP OR RESPONsibility over dogs, understanding how dogs "think," and the benefits of natural pet food are among the interesting topics in the premiere issue of "The Bow & Wow Times."

The newsletter is given free to customers at "Bow & Wow," the natural pet foods store at L/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

How does one care for a new puppy or adult dog, and ensure the health and happiness of your cat? "The Bow & Wow Times" tackles nutrition, training, pet welfare and other pet matters.

There's a feature article on "Animal Adoptions" and practical suggestions for a new dog's homecoming and how to dignify your dog may be surprising.

Another article is "The cruelty of chaining or tethering dogs"—why chaining is dangerous to dogs.

The newsletter also has "five reasons to have pets" and "Natural pet food benefits."

There's also an article on "How to stop your dog from barking" plus an education piece on "The Labrador and its personality."

Entertainment center's family promo

TIMEZONE FAMILY entertainment center is perfect for tots who love running around and playing boundless games and activities. Avail of Timezone's promotions in line with Sony Pictures' latest movie, "Terminator Salvation."

Timezone offers freebies, prizes, arcade machines and Powercard packages. With the special promotions up for grabs, loyal patrons of Timezone won't be able to resist reloading more credits into their Powercards to take home as much "Terminator Salvation" free items as possible.

Until 31 Timezone outlets around June 30, get free one pocket notepad for every P150 worth of Powercard load, free one bottle opener and pocket notepad for every P350 worth of Powercard load, and free one premium pen for every P600 worth of Powercard load.

NEW OFFICERS OF IKEBODO IKEBANA SOCIETY
The new set of officers for 2009-2011 of the Ikebodo Ikebana Society of Manila was recently inducted into office by Elvee Chavez (seated, left), past president of the World Flower Council and general manager of King Louie Flowers and Plants Inc. From left, Joyce Kato, president; Adoracion S. Bernabe, 1st vice president; Mary Dee Co, recording secretary; Linda Limpe, corresponding secretary; Dr. Lupe Lizaso, treasurer; Silvia Sarao, asst. treasurer; and Aida Villanueva, Teresita Baldonado, Melissa D. Ignacio and Dr. Norma P. Raimundo Jr., members of the board of directors. At extreme right is professor Socrates S. Medla, outgoing president and ex-officio officer.

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Oh MY CASH! National Book Store is giving away up to a whopping P2 million worth of prizes this back-to-school season. Get a raffle coupon when you buy a P500 single receipt purchase, exclusive of any of the participating items. Just look for the 'N' stickers! There will be 11 lucky winners each of P50,000 (1st prize), P30,000 (2nd prize), and P20,000 (3rd prize) nationwide. 110 minor prize winners will take home P10,000 worth of National Book Store Gift Certificates.

Get a **Bad N' Book shoulder bag** for only P99 when you buy up to P500 worth of purchases with qualifying items. Buy P1,000 worth of items and the **Clutter Keeper** pouch is yours free!

Promo runs until June 30, 2009.
Raffle draw is on July 15, 2009.

back to school
uniforms
at the children's wear department
my store . my SM
WHITE BLOUSE
P.E. UNIFORMS
white shirt/t-shirt
jogging pants
PLEATED SKIRT
navy
maroon
green
UNDERWEAR
starter bras
panties
camisole tops
SM

THE SMOKY shade of the glass plate contrasts the detailing of a home with traditional decor.

COLORFUL glassware needs a plain backdrop. If the surrounding is cluttered, the piece loses its impact.

How to decorate with glass

From page D1

a strong impact for their floor treatment.

Decorative

There are many ways to present glass as a distinct decor:

- Art glass comes in various forms: wine glasses, vases, bowls, candy dishes, pitchers, plates, dinnerware and cups and saucers.
- Arranging a set of glass in a single style makes a definite statement.
- When using various types of glass for an eclectic look, arrange pieces by color, shape, pattern and texture.
- Art glass can be displayed throughout the home in many ways. Aside from being displayed in the cabinet of a kitchen or dining room, it can be prominent on shelves and tables.
- The colors of a matched glass vase can be a take-off point for the choice of flowers.
- A single-colored candy bowl, filled with colorful confections, can become a charming element for the living room.

MURANO glass, known for its beautiful color combinations and complex designs, makes a favorite focal point in any interior.

Indonesian food promo

H.E. Prof. Ir.Jero Tambunan, Indonesian Ambassador to the Philippines, and Odette Yeo, general manager, The Heritage Hotel Manila, led the cutting of the Tumpeng to formally open the 3rd year run of the Indonesian food promo dubbed as "Indonesian Spice and Everything Nice." The Indonesian buffet spread is available for lunch and dinner until June 7. Call 904-8888.

Contest on Taiwan

The Taiwan Tourism Bureau is launching "The Best Trip in the World" contest on its official website http://www.TaiwanBestTrip.net to let more people around the world know that Taiwan is a fantastic place to travel. Teams of at least two persons must come up with a more-or-less original yet creative four-day itinerary trip to Taiwan. The selected fifty teams with the best itineraries will receive NT$25,000 (approximately US$800) to spend during their four-day trip to Taiwan. The team with the best entry will receive the grand prize of NT$1,000,000 (approximately US$30,000) and travel in Taiwan for one month. Team contestants can join the contest online from June 1 to 28 by filling out the "Team Entry Form" in English, Chinese or Japanese. They should submit an itinerary called "Plan for Team Travel in Taiwan," which should include a clear theme for their tour, and upload a short video pitch introducing their team members on the contest website. The 50 selected teams will be announced on July 28.

THE ANTIDAGON Vodka Star Search, a competition for Antonov's official image endorsers, is set to final phase with 17 talents competing. The grand prize winners of P 100,000 in cash, Antonov products and one-year modeling contract with Antonov Vodka. Voting for each finalist is ongoing online at the Antonov Vodka Star Search website, and at some of the hottest bars and restaurants in Metro Manila.

Virgilio Almario lecture

Originally slated on June 6, the free lecture by National Artist for Literature Virgilio S. Almario, also known as the poet Rio Alma will be moved to June 17. The lecture, titled "Bakla, mangmang na Pantikaniang Gunda" will be held 1 p.m. at Room 201 of the College of Arts and Letters in UP Diliman. The lecture is free and open to the public. Call 981-8500.

Cheer dance tilt

Overdrive holds its 1st summer cheer dance competition finals on

THE HERITAGE Hotel guest chefs Primad Hermawanto and Augustinus Wiratno Suga from Hilbonnian Hotel Sirnijaksaru

June 6 at festival supermall. Four-teen groups from around the metro will compete for the finals. Prizes are P50,000 for the grand prize; P15,000, 2nd place; and P10,000, 3rd place. There will also be a special prize for the best in costume re-cieving P15,000. Festival Supermall is in Filoils Edsa cor Coronado City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Call 8823314.

Indie film showing

Cinemalaya winner "Baby Angelo" is Indie Sine's offering for the entire month of June. The award-winning indie film starring Katherine Luna, Cles Damuda, Jojit Lorenzo, Mark Gil and Archie Alemania will be shown at Robinsons Galleria Indie Sine from June 3-4 in 7 p.m. screenings for the rest of the month. For block screenings and bulk sale discounts, e-mail indie@indiesine.com or call 890-4304.

ENTERTAINMENT

Edna Emma G. Valerio

Hey there, Sim Study!

SACHA BARON COHEN, left, gave this year's MTV Movie Awards its trademark bizarre moment when he "flew" over the audience and landed upside down on ceramic Eminem's lap. He later in the homophobic rapper's face. Earlier, before hell, he stole the show when he arrived before the ceremony on Sunday. See page E8.

Opening Today

Baby Angelo

Stars Katherine Luna, Cee Quezada, Mark Gil, Jojit Lorenzo, Archie Adamanic; directed by Joel Ruiz

A lifeless fetus is found in an apartment's dumpster, leading the landlady (Quezada) to suspect the different tenants. This "experimental drama" won Best Production Design in last year's Cinemalaya and was screened at the 2006 Pusan Film Fest in Korea. Lito Zulueta of the Inquirer calls it "an intriguing film ... successful in evoking the smothering confines of tenement living." Exclusively in Indelible Robinsons Galleria.

Drag Me to Hell

Stars Alison Lohman, Justin Long, Lorna Raver, Dileep Rao; directed

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TERMINATOR: SALVATION	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2

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DUPLICITY / DRAG ME TO HELL

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

- TERMINATOR: SALVATION
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- NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
- DUPLICITY

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- DUPLICITY

SM CITY MARILAO

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- DUPLICITY

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

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SM CITY BACOOR

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SM CITY BICUTAN

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SM CITY CLARK

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SM CITY CEBU

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LUZON

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SM CITY BALIWAG

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SM CITY CALAMBA

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SM CITY OLONGAPO

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- DRAG ME TO HELL
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- DUPLICITY

VISAYAS • MINDANAO

SM CITY MANDAUE

- TERMINATOR: SALVATION
- NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
- DRAG ME TO HELL
- DUPLICITY

SM CITY CEBU

- TERMINATOR: SALVATION
- NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
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SM CITY DAVAO

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SM CITY ILOILO

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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

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SM CITY GENERAL SANTOS

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June 6, 5pm-10pm; Greenbelt 3 Park

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
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'Twilight' takes big bite out of MTV Movie Awards

LOS ANGELES – THE MTV MOVIE Awards were a bloodbath Sunday night with "Twilight" taking five trophies, including Best Movie. But it was Sacha Baron Cohen who gave the show its trademark bizarre moment when he landed upside down on the lap of Eminem — who may (or may not) have been deeply offended.

"Twilight," the popular vampire drama starring Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart, racked up the Golden Popcorn trophies for Best Movie, Best Fight, Best Kiss, Breakthrough Male Performance and Female Performance during Sunday's over-the-top ceremony at the Gibson Amphitheater in Universal City, California, which is common by viewers.

BEST KISS award went to "Twilight's" Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart. AP

Trophy drop

"The fans are the ultimate driving force," Stewart said while accepting her Best Female Performance trophy (which she promptly dropped on the floor).

Other winners included "High School Musical 3: Senior Year" star Zac Efron for Male Performance and his co-star Ashley Tisdale for Female Breakthrough Performance. Miley Cyrus got Best Song from a Movie for "The Climb" ("Hannah Montana: The Movie") possessing "Twilight" from sweeping all six nominated categories.

Amy Poehler's screaming in a sink in "Baby Mama" won a new award: The MTV Movie.

Feathery Bruno

But even that was upstaged by Baron Cohen, who flew in above the audience as his Bandanian character "Bruno." Dressed in a pair of feathery white wings with most of his rear end exposed, the comedian crashed into an overhead trapeze and was lowered directly into Eminem's lap in the audience, his bare bondquarters in the rapper's face.

"It's the real Slim Shady about to stand up!" chirped Baron Cohen.

Eminem seemed upset. Members of his entourage roughly moved Baron Cohen as the rapper struggled to get out. But was the homophobic rapper pissed, or was he in on the elaborate joke? He said angrily "Get that (expletive) off me" and hoisted his face away in disgust. He stormed out, seemingly in no way cameras-rolling, and left the venue.

Rehearsals

Baron Cohen's descent in the audience was included in rehearsals, but Eminem, who performed Sunday night, didn't take part in the run-through. As the rapper stormed off, it sounded like he was wearing a mic, and cameras were in position, but he was not seen or heard from again.

Baron Cohen's publicist, Matthew Lehrer, had no comment after the show. An MTV spokesperson would not confirm whether Eminem was caught by surprise, and representatives for the rapper did not immediately return requests for comment.

His first

It wasn't the first time Slim Shady at an MTV ceremony. Sports Illustrated reported that Eminem was interviewed by Triumph the Insult Comic Dog at 2002's MTV Video Music Awards.

Before this year's broadcast, Heath Ledger was named Best Villain in polls for his twisted turn as the Joker in "The Dark Knight." Jim Carrey later won for Best Comedic Performance for "Yes Man." Dick Stellar received the MTV Generation Award, the show's highest honor, from a trio of presenters: Oprah, Triumph the Insult Comic Dog and a weeping Bieber lachrymal.

"But, I have never had the privilege of working with you, but when I see the remarkable consistency you display in your films, whether you're portraying a man with his balls caught in his zipper or a man struggling to control his diarrhea on a date, I see a consummate professional who commands the respect of his co-actors," said Sutherland.

Mash-up

Andy Samberg kicked off the show with a movie mash-up featuring cameos from Taylor Swift and Justin Timberlake before courting an on-stage rap performance in which he tried to woo a surly-looking Megan Fox in the audience. He later crooned with Will Ferrell during a film montage that pulled him as "soul papa" in movies who "don't look at explosions." They had more than enough clips to work with, including shots of John Travolta, Will Smith and Denzel Washington walking nonchalantly away from a booming cuboom. AP

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1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
5 DRAG ME TO HELL
6 FROM WITHIN
7 DALAW
8 BABY ANGELO
9 BFF: BEST FRIEND FOREVER
10 HOUSE

ERMITA

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 DRAG ME TO HELL
4 ANGELS & DEMONS
5 FROM WITHIN
6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
7 DALAW

METRO EAST

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
4 DRAG ME TO HELL
5 ANGELS & DEMONS
6 FROM WITHIN
7 DALAW
8 BFF: BEST FRIEND FOREVER

NOVALICHES

1 DRAG ME TO HELL
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
4 ANGELS & DEMONS

PIONEER

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 DRAG ME TO HELL
4 FROM WITHIN

Trivia: IS SHOCK WITH 2008 Cinemalaya Winner Best Production Design

BABY ANGELO

Showing from June 3 to 9

MOVIEWORLD

STA. ROSA

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 DRAG ME TO HELL
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
4 DED NA SI LOLO

LIPA

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

DASMARIÑAS

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 DRAG ME TO HELL
4 DED NA SI LOLO

IMUS

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 DRAG ME TO HELL
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
4 DED NA SI LOLO

STARMILLS

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 DRAG ME TO HELL
5 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
6 DED NA SI LOLO

ANGELES

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 DRAG ME TO HELL
4 DED NA SI LOLO

TACLOBAN

STATE OF THE ART CINEMAS

Opening on June 11

BACOLOD

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
5 DRAG ME TO HELL
6 17 AGAIN

ILOILO

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
5 DRAG ME TO HELL
6 GHOSTS of GIRLFRIENDS PAST

New twist in Hayden . . .

From page E1

things and kissed ang kuyang!"

As we say, we gotta nominate our number nine.

Eye for talent

Pido Pascual is producing the headlining movie of Bugoso Dominggo, "Binukot," lyng member for Ilpa. A great actor like PJ has an eye for real talent. It takes one to know one whose careers are always "take nte."

Curves delights

Careers-like Festival's first Director **Brillante Mendoza** shared with us some delights about his sojourn in France. "During the latter part of the fest, we got tired of sopal na food so we ate at a cheap Chinese resto, but no rules outside mag-diet," he recalls. "Ang napakalupit ng tabakol verses pare makabili ng cheap na souvenirs (laughs). For the easy part, my tea and shoes were sponsored by Noah and we were given one night and three additional rooms at Hotel Grey D'Alliance at 400 euros per room."

Ooh, is he 'the Le Mendoza'

Contagious sweetness

Rhiz Chiu, Jake Cuenca, Gerald Anderson and the cuddi-nestled cast of "Thy-ong Dalawa" (sweetnights-alike "Only You" on ABS-CBN), are in a euphoric state because the series has stayed on top of the ratings since its pilot episode.

Hilo sun IC told me that during his shoot with Kris and Gerald, Gerald would always get a kick out of seeing Rhiz in a maiden way.

Gerald's sweetness is contagious. So we-der the viewers are hooked!

PERSONAL

Danilo a call to the Renaissance fond "angels" Grace Calingo and Mak Pamaria for a scrump-tuo dinner at the Ini's Dimsum resto Jo-nine. I couldn't stop laughing.

E-mail warrighot-dumgdao@yahoo.com

OPENING TODAY

From page E1

by Sam Reimi

Liam **nNeeson** (Lathanic) enters a downtown elder who puts a curse on her, turning her life into a nightmare. Peter Debruge of Variety assesses: "The pic is single-mindedly devoted to punking the audience's bottom." Bruce Nixon of Screen International describes it as "thickly cunky, engaging."

Notorious

Stars Jamal Woolard, Angela Bassett, Derek Luke, Anthony Mackie; directed by George Tillman.

JAMAL Woolard

Bio-pic traces the meteoric rise and untimely demise of hip hop legend Christopher "The Notorious B.I.G." Wallace (Woolard). Claudia Puig of USA Today sums it up as a "well-crafted thing. It looks good ... but there's not much there." Jason Anderson of Toronto Star thinks it's "terrific, good, gripping." Exclusively at Ayala Malls Cinemas.

From Within

Stars Elizabeth Rice, Adam Goldberg, Shauree Wilkes, Rhonna Dekker, Laura Allen; directed by Phedon Papamichael

As a sleepy town is plagued with suicides, a teenager (Rice) is convinced she's next in peril. Dennis Harvey of Variety relates: "Decently crafted pic holds attention ... [and] injects some novelty into the genre." Aaron Hunt of Lit-tle White Lies explains: "All manner of spooky confrontations are engineered." Howard Feinstein of Screen International says: It's a "little more than another lackeyed horror film."

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

AL LIPIN — BY JOSUARRA

FUSAO BARDY — BY RYL JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEHUNGRY — BY ELIZABETH CHICHOLO

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PABALINAS

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

TULDOK — BY PAWN COLL

SEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

ATOMO AND WEBOT — BY LYRA GARCILLANO

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

FOR DOPE TODAY: Your love sensitivities... You know how to handle people. People find you entertaining and witty, and invariably seek out your company. You have a warm heart and high standards for yourself and others. However, you lose the respect of your peers. They never learn in a romantic, tickle-your-chest, somersaults-and-dove relationships are important.

RITHEON (of Rahul Nanda, Jessie Anderson Cooper, Tiffanie Ann Puno, Jason Rodney, John Rodriguez)

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Some more notes come in. Mountain today. Your sources of income, because this is possible today. You're working hard to earn money, and you're working hard to spend it as well.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're full of ideas, initiative and drive today! Use your energy to get the jobs some reminder of the something that can improve your health, especially by eating more fibre.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Remind the women, children or even a vulnerable activity might benefit you. Others today. Focus on the positive and you'll be in your element. Don't

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Serious activities are exciting and energetic for you. Your insight has to extend to speak to any kind of joint effort to achieve something with others. Today likely, the result will be an improvement.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your ambitions to energize and motivate today. You have the energy to move mountains. Talk to people to power and make suggestions about how to do things for a better way. They will listen!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Travel plans are exciting. Some of your concerns today will be to get the information or learning that you want. It's a great day for publishing and the media as well.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Work side others to wrap up some details about miscellaneous. Improve matters and shared property. It's easy to get people to do what you want today. Good!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Attention to detail with partners and close friends likely will improve your relationships. Others will seem way. You're determined to be and not have to get along better. Work good.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Work hard to achieve your goals. Your confidence will do something to improve your health as well especially through physical activity.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20): You've got more of energy for sports, fun, entertainment and creative activities. Your social life could experience today. Playful activities with children will be excited! Relax.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Accumulate as much information as you can about your career and understanding problems at home today. At the very least, reduce stress and get rid of garbage.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're in a tough negotiation today. You can somehow, without compromising, to see your way of thinking. Artistic and hobbies also are extremely entertaining.

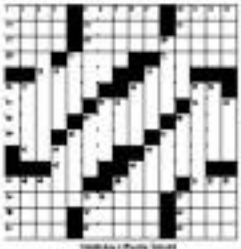
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1. Author's
2. Not to be outdone
3. Collective noun for whales
4. Collective noun for wolves
5. Ebb, wane
6. Lubricate or make smooth
7. Pertaining to the moon or Greek goddess Artemis
8. Nuclear family unit
9. Ate
10. Pertaining to the sun
11. Mixed-breed dog
12. Chicago or Indiana
13. Academic
14. Central Oregon
15. Dynamic
16. Lake around the Everglades
17. Pertaining to parenting
18. Pertaining to the ear
19. Pertaining to the nose
20. Pertaining to the eye
21. Pertaining to the mouth
22. Pertaining to the hand
23. Pertaining to the foot
24. Pertaining to the leg
25. Pertaining to the arm
26. Pertaining to the head
27. Pertaining to the neck
28. Pertaining to the back
29. Pertaining to the chest
30. Pertaining to the abdomen
31. Pertaining to the hip
32. Pertaining to the shoulder
33. Pertaining to the knee
34. Pertaining to the elbow
35. Pertaining to the wrist
36. Pertaining to the ankle
37. Pertaining to the toe
38. Pertaining to the finger
39. Pertaining to the thumb
40. Pertaining to the nail
41. Pertaining to the hair
42. Pertaining to the skin
43. Pertaining to the bone
44. Pertaining to the muscle
45. Pertaining to the blood
46. Pertaining to the heart
47. Pertaining to the lung
48. Pertaining to the liver
49. Pertaining to the kidney
50. Pertaining to the stomach
51. Pertaining to the intestine
52. Pertaining to the bladder
53. Pertaining to the gland
54. Pertaining to the nerve
55. Pertaining to the brain
56. Pertaining to the spinal cord
57. Pertaining to the reproductive system
58. Pertaining to the urinary system
59. Pertaining to the digestive system
60. Pertaining to the respiratory system
61. Pertaining to the circulatory system
62. Pertaining to the lymphatic system
63. Pertaining to the endocrine system
64. Pertaining to the immune system
65. Pertaining to the integumentary system
66. Pertaining to the skeletal system
67. Pertaining to the muscular system
68. Pertaining to the nervous system
69. Pertaining to the reproductive system
70. Pertaining to the urinary system
71. Pertaining to the digestive system
72. Pertaining to the respiratory system
73. Pertaining to the circulatory system
74. Pertaining to the lymphatic system
75. Pertaining to the endocrine system
76. Pertaining to the immune system
77. Pertaining to the integumentary system
78. Pertaining to the skeletal system
79. Pertaining to the muscular system
80. Pertaining to the nervous system

DOWN

1. Pertaining to the sun
2. Pertaining to the moon
3. Pertaining to the earth
4. Pertaining to the sky
5. Pertaining to the water
6. Pertaining to the fire
7. Pertaining to the air
8. Pertaining to the wind
9. Pertaining to the rain
10. Pertaining to the snow
11. Pertaining to the ice
12. Pertaining to the cold
13. Pertaining to the heat
14. Pertaining to the light
15. Pertaining to the dark
16. Pertaining to the color
17. Pertaining to the sound
18. Pertaining to the smell
19. Pertaining to the taste
20. Pertaining to the touch
21. Pertaining to the sight
22. Pertaining to the hearing
23. Pertaining to the speech
24. Pertaining to the writing
25. Pertaining to the reading
26. Pertaining to the arithmetic
27. Pertaining to the geometry
28. Pertaining to the algebra
29. Pertaining to the calculus
30. Pertaining to the statistics
31. Pertaining to the probability
32. Pertaining to the logic
33. Pertaining to the philosophy
34. Pertaining to the religion
35. Pertaining to the theology
36. Pertaining to the ethics
37. Pertaining to the morality
38. Pertaining to the law
39. Pertaining to the justice
40. Pertaining to the crime
41. Pertaining to the punishment
42. Pertaining to the prison
43. Pertaining to the police
44. Pertaining to the court
45. Pertaining to the judge
46. Pertaining to the jury
47. Pertaining to the lawyer
48. Pertaining to the witness
49. Pertaining to the evidence
50. Pertaining to the verdict
51. Pertaining to the sentence
52. Pertaining to the appeal
53. Pertaining to the parole
54. Pertaining to the probation
55. Pertaining to the rehabilitation
56. Pertaining to the reform
57. Pertaining to the education
58. Pertaining to the school
59. Pertaining to the university
60. Pertaining to the college
61. Pertaining to the graduate
62. Pertaining to the undergraduate
63. Pertaining to the professor
64. Pertaining to the student
65. Pertaining to the teacher
66. Pertaining to the curriculum
67. Pertaining to the syllabus
68. Pertaining to the textbook
69. Pertaining to the library
70. Pertaining to the laboratory
71. Pertaining to the experiment
72. Pertaining to the research
73. Pertaining to the thesis
74. Pertaining to the dissertation
75. Pertaining to the publication
76. Pertaining to the journal
77. Pertaining to the magazine
78. Pertaining to the newspaper
79. Pertaining to the book
80. Pertaining to the author



CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

			3	6				
			8		2			
6	9	2	1			5		
9							3	
4				8				9
5							6	
2	7	3	6			4		
			5		7			
			2	9				

Starting hint: ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	2	8	1	3	9	4	6	5
3	8	4	6	5	2	7	1	9
5	9	1	7	8	4	3	2	6
6	7	2	4	9	3	8	5	1
8	4	3	6	5	1	9	7	2
1	5	9	2	7	8	6	3	4
9	1	7	8	2	6	5	4	3
4	3	6	9	1	5	2	8	7
2	8	5	3	4	7	1	9	6

New twist in Hayden, Katrina video scandal

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I had enough of the Hayden-Katrina foreshadow, I stumbled upon a shocking piece of evidence. After all has been said, cajoled, screamed and done, there's still more to unravel.

This time, it's not a videotape but an audiotape. It was inadvertently recorded by a non-smark household helper on her cell phone.

Hissing goons up to show his, I thought I've already shook-proof but up on hearing the tape my jaw dropped. It swallowed low-cost show biz can be.

The helper will surely turn [illegible] once the recording falls into the wrong hands. The tape is the boss now.

Refreshing face

Regine Velasquez has one of the most refreshing faces in the biz. Her sunny disposition is to put-on. She maintains her glow by frequenting USA [Young Unlimited] Skin Care Center of Dr. Isabel Lopez Nazal, which she endorses. Other celebs clients include Shiel Enriquez, Cherry Pie Picache, Kristine Hermosa, Rio Locsin, Kris Bernal, Aljur Abrenica, Ryan Cayabyab, Dion Ignacio and Bubbles Castillo.

"I have regular IV treatments, which is like a marriage with the different of a good workout," says Regine. She has also washed out her marriage and accusation with Lucky Wata Boy Abunda.

"Love is really [illegible] the second time around," she gushes. "Earlier has his own work at the Department of Foreign Affairs now and he's busy with exams, too. This way we don't suffocate each other. Couples should be each other's space."

Her advice to other women on how to win their man back?

"Don't give too much of yourself away," she says. "Men like challenge. Don't say about pero no-lovers already ignored!

Twitterworld

Pia Guanio posted on her Twitter account: "That guy who pounced water on Hayden was funny."

Raymond Gutierrez "buzzed off" on his twin Richard, also on Twitter: "To those who are asking—Chard is ok . . . all medical checkups turned out fine. Still sad about it, though."

Also on Twitter, Sonia Cortes is depressed about a different matter: "I lost my Blackberry . . . I'm so sad. It was my life."

Publicity hounds

Industry veterans is shocked at Glenda Severnino's behavior. Allegedly heartbroken, SS attempted suicide. Upon waking up at the hospital, SS's first words were: "Am I all over the papers?"

It's true that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Hamilton tried to stop SS's idiom from grasping [illegible] but she would not be pre-nailed upon.

Big pirates

An insider insists that pirates will never be completely eradicated because the top pirates in the country are Industry Bigwigs, including Major Producers.

An Indie Producer confirms this. MP's top allegedly approached B'wid, acting as broker for pirated films, tried to buy B's film for P15,000—for possible distribution in Quiapo.

Scent of a troubled man

NETIZENS INSIDER says Troubled Actor figured in his rich scandal because of a long-drawn struggle with substance abuse.

Dr allegedly reported for smack under the influence. Ironically, his co-workers were clueless, but Dr reeked of marijuana, SS claims.

In short, Dr wasn't even aware of his luxurious aura on the set of his latest project—which eventually led to a raging controversy.

Sex video ad nauseum

Sore sign that a scandal has reached saturation point: the grapevine becomes deluged with the wildest rumors.

Latest gossip is that, apart from a bevy of beauties, two Hunky Blinded Actors also left victims to a sex video scandal.

Some women were videotaped not in the sex act, but in a dressing room. Two Sweet Actresses and Married Celebrity were videotaped while getting dressed.

Singer-Actress was spared because she wisely decided to dress up elsewhere.

Perverted Perpetrator of the above-mentioned crimes all, legedly showed off his stash to two Male Celebrities. One of the MCs rammed his Asterisk. Call Bi-tard to stay away from PP's place of business.

Speaking of which, why were the sex videos of Katherine Luna and Celeb-lic Valle released by their disgraceful ex-lovers already ignored?

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THE 11-MEMBER dance group Diversity beat crowd favorites, Scottish singer Susan Boyle, in the TV reunion "Britain's Got Talent" in the final round Saturday.

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed last weekend's gubitary on TV (And why we are sorry if we are sorry.)

- Lolit Solis on Headline Kiss:

"Among blessing isa ito? Makakawasi na ang mga bahong mura niya. Still wala siyang mission." (Design.)

- Vicki Belo on being introduced to the sex video scandal:

"Of all the kinds I've been through, this is probably the worst. But I always try to see a silver lining. Maybe the younger brother is in her heart to finally be passed against things like these and for women in revenge that . . . If somebody has a girlfriend, you shouldn't go in there and try to steal him." (Among Ateneo na ang sampot, Tito.)

- Heart on Lolit's allegation that she supports Hayden financially:

"Di ko alam saan niya nakukuha yan. Nakakabigay sa parents ni Hayden... Wala naman akong binibigay na pera. Nandito lang ako as a friend. Moral support." (Ano in cash, di siya ang naglalagay ng gas—tsismosa!)

- Dennis Roldi on her sex video of backscanner complaint against Sarah Geronimo:

"Pinatahimik ito pr na nagpadala pa ang pagkatao ko. Napaglaruan ako ng ibang magaling na tao." (Amen.)

- Baron on the controversy:

"Everything went okay. We're back at work. Everything's good. We're at peace." (Wow, sobrang sweet.)

- Marian Rivera on her first day playing the role of "Darna":

"Kinabahan ako. Medyo natuyo na ako sa harness at yung mga mata ni Darna na medyo bilog ang galaw. Ayaw kasi ni Direk Dondon (Zapata) ng medyo maninipis, gusto niya medyo bilugan pa rin. Medyo nakakatakot. Kasi yung costume niya parang pero mabigat kasi ang daming fiber niya." (Medyo... ano kaya?)

- Marian on report that she and Dingdong Dantes spent vacation with our member's inlaws:

"Hindi. Nandoon kasi kasal niya kaya kasama ko yung mga mother niya sa kanya ano mga mommy nya sila. Ang saya nga eh kasi kasama ko sila. Parang sila, kung meron man sila, akin na yun." (Ano raw?)

- Judy Ann Santos, asked about her first month of marriage to Ryan Agoncillo:

"Hindi naman naapanis na isang buwan na pala kami nagsasama. Masaya. Sinubukan ko po yung mga obligasyon ko at responsibilidad ko sa kanya at lalo nating asawa kaniya. Mabuti naman." (Don't worry, dadami pa talaga yan.)

- John Lloyd Cruz on reports he has separated from girlfriend Lin Uy:

"Siguro dumating yung time na... mahalagapagkapayo ako ng mga mas malalaw na mamamayan tungkol dun. Kasi yung pong sa ano mo..." (Ang-hirap na sila, in short.)

- Lipstick on reports identifying Sarah Geronimo as the cause of the breakup:

"Di ko naman pinagkakaitan na si Sarah, nagsing special na mga tulugan sa akin si Sarah. Hindi gagawin. Iyon is doesn't follow na kung special si [illegible] yung isang tao, [illegible] siya." (Spoiler alert: Ang new movie nila.) With Gerry Pleñas (Starstill, The Buzz)